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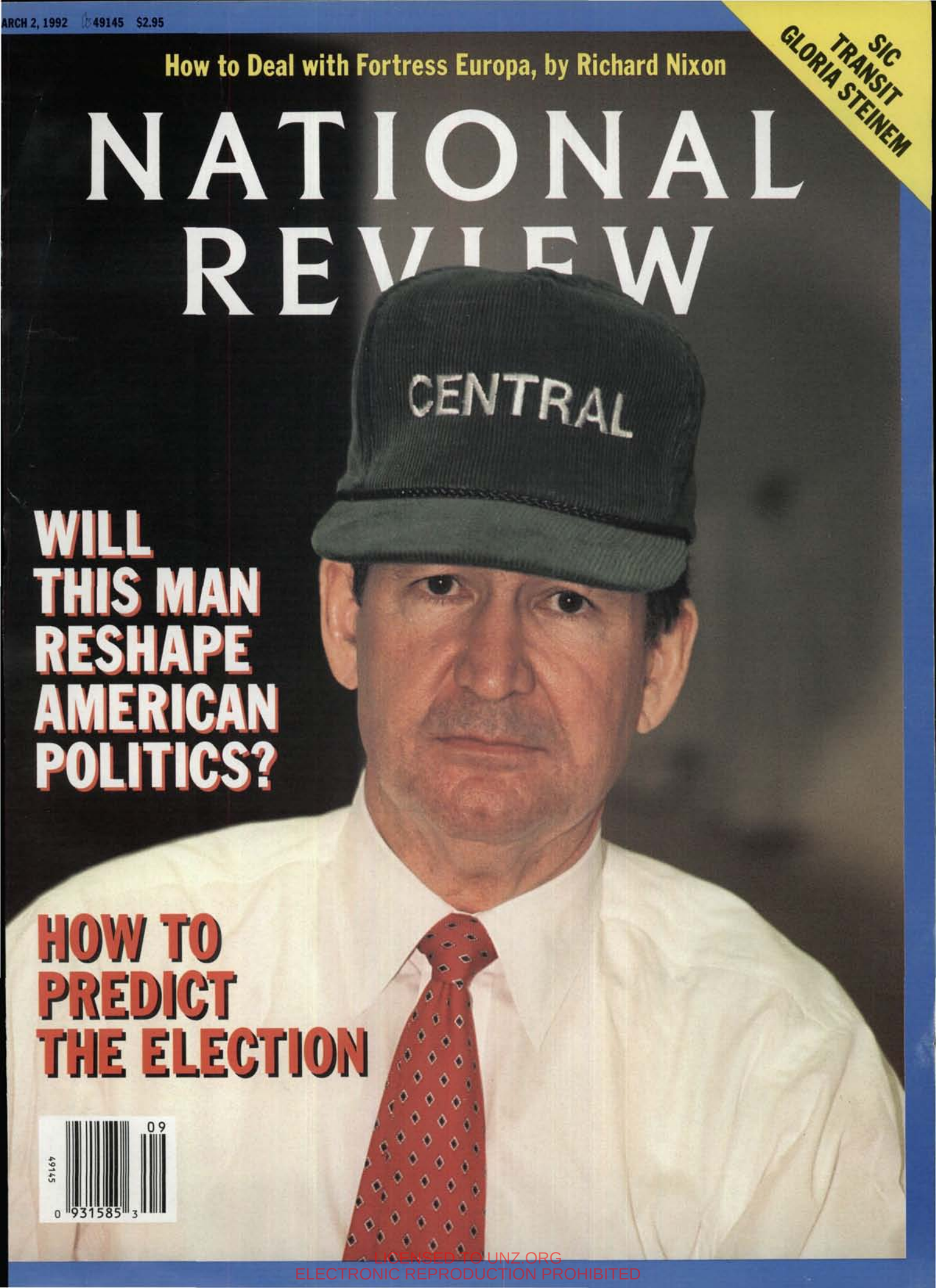
NATIONAL REVIEW



WILL THIS MAN RESHAPE AMERICAN POLITICS?

HOW TO PREDICT THE ELECTION

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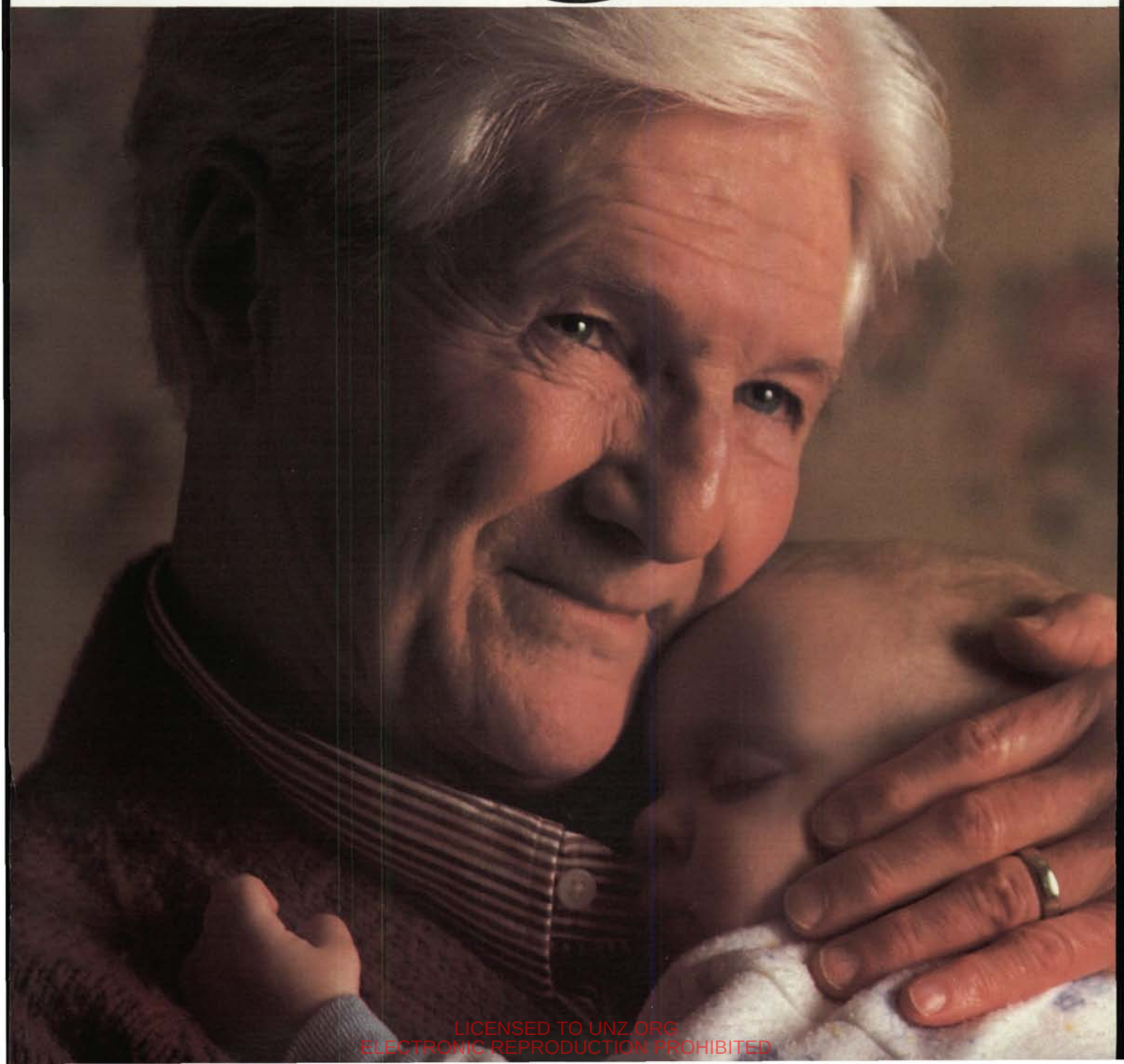

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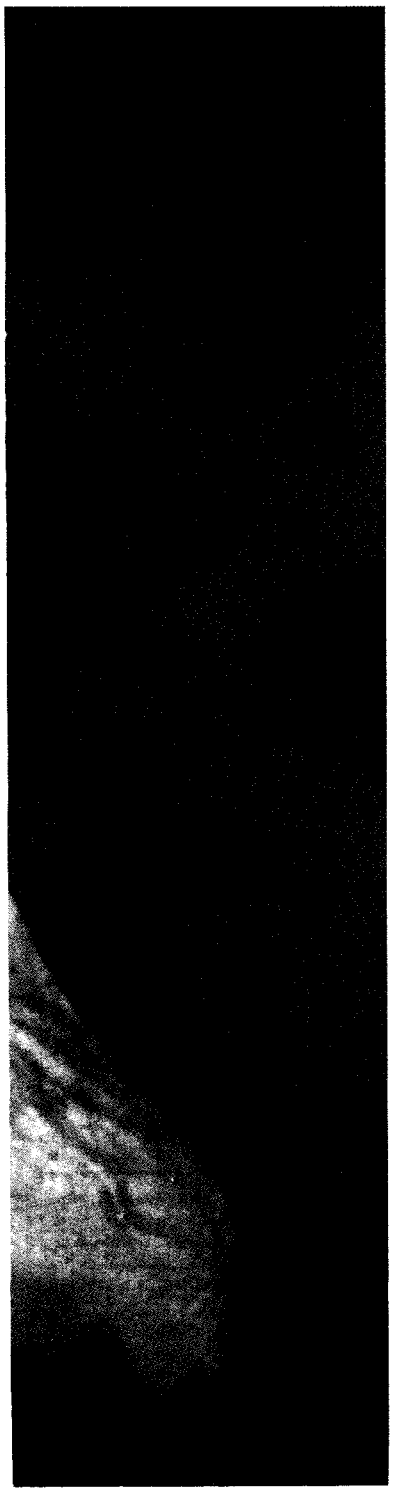

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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The Audit Bureau

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I'll never forget it.

It was February, 1984. It was 10 below. And I was standing in the middle of a pig farm in Iowa cold and nervous and thinking to myself,"How am I going to do this?" I was directing my first caucus and it was anything but Hollywood glamorous.

There were no politicians, no bright lights and no large crowds. Just this young couple in their own home, reading a caucus "how to" book, serving juice and cookies, counting votes, and trying to figure out what to do and how to make the process work -- just like I was. Somehow we all managed to pull it together. And it was the first time in my career that I walked away from a job and thought, "this didn't happen by accident."

Now, eight years and many road trips later, I'm sending my own people out to direct their first caucus. They understand, like I do, that the election process isn't always confined to big cities and large convention halls. In fact, sometimes the most important moments in democracy unfold in a school house...or in a town hall...or on a pig farm in Iowa.

92 ELECTION
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LETTERS

Illusions of Grandeur

Ed Rubenstein did an excellent job of showing the statistical skullduggery in Barlett and Steele's *Philadelphia Inquirer* series ["Right Data," Feb. 3]. He did not, however, address an additional statistical error that is more basic and pervasive.

Whenever one compares two distributions with different averages the result is an exaggeration of the changes at the highest percentile levels. For example, suppose that in time period A, the average income was $16,000, and by inflation alone this average increased to $32,000 in period B. The dollar is now worth only half as much, but everything denominated in dollars doubles: poor Mr. X who earned $1,000 now earns $2,000; rich Mr. Y who earned $1 million now earns $2 million, etc. Clearly the relative economic status has not changed.

What conclusions might an unwary person draw from the data? The analysis that follows would reveal similar effects, regardless of the underlying distribution. But to be more realistic I have used a long normal distribution which fits income data quite well. Moving from period A to period B there are three times as many people who now earn more than $31,000; seven times as many who earn more than $62,000; seventeen times as many earn more than $125,000. These exaggerated effects at the extreme tails of a distribution operate whether we express incomes in constant or current dollars. Clearly they do not support the conclusion that the "rich got richer."

John E. Reith
Wilmington, Del.

Mistaken Identity

NATIONAL REVIEW is mistaken in asserting that in a recent *New York Post* column I described several crimes "committed by blacks against whites" ["The Week," Feb. 3]. My column did contrast the muted public reaction to several violent crimes with the city-wide hysteria following the reports that two black children were squirted with white sneaker polish.

But the crimes I mentioned were by no means all black on white crimes, nor did I identify them as such. In one case, the arrested suspects were Hispanic; in another no arrests have been made; some of the victims of the two "wilding" rampages may have been black.

I do applaud NATIONAL REVIEW for highlighting the dangers of what you aptly describe as "affirmative action in law enforcement"—the classification of relatively rare white on black crime as "bias crime" and thus especially heinous.

Scott McConnell
New York, N.Y.

Honorably Hacknowledged

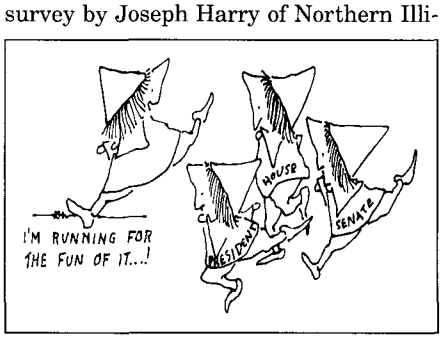
Steven Goldberg discusses the possibility of "an hereditary component to homosexuality" ["What Is Normal," Feb. 3]. He is following the spelling rule about words beginning with *h* that have three or more syllables but do not have initial stress. Can an historian explain how such an horrendously ugly usage came to be accepted as good grammar? Whether one is an homosexual or an heterosexual, following this rule is an habnormal act.

George Jochnowitz
Professor of Linguistics
The College of Staten Island
Staten Island, N.Y.

Gay Numbers

In my recent piece on possible physiological elements in the causation of homosexuality, I unthinkingly restated a figure for American males who are homosexual or bisexual (10 per cent) that has been repeated so often that the evidential basis for the claim is rarely examined.

The 10 per cent figure, which was extrapolated from studies by Kinsey four decades ago, was exaggerated even then. Associates of Kinsey subsequently lowered the estimate to 5 per cent. A recent survey by Joseph Harry of Northern Illinois University concluded that under 4 per cent of the male population is primarily homosexual or bisexual. While the nature of the issue makes precision difficult, nearly all researchers who have no political incentive for exaggeration accept this figure on the basis of Harry's study and other evidence that is unrelated to the study.



But for other purposes we would want to know as precisely as the evidence permits the percentage of American men who are primarily homosexual or bisexual, and I certainly did not help matters by repeating a figure that has become as consecrated as it is dubious.

Steven Goldberg
New York, N.Y.

Who's in Charge

You mentioned that "Canadians are looking to former Premier Joe Clark, now Constitutional Affairs Minister in-Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government, to save their country from falling apart" ["For the Record," Jan. 20]. For the record, Honorable Joe Clark was Prime Minister of Canada not Premier. Provinces have Premiers while the leader of the country is the Prime Minister, as in Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The equivalent comparison in the United States is Governor and President. The Quebec question is being examined at the federal level. It would be wrong to assume that a former Premier of a province would be in charge of the constitutional affairs related to the future of Canada.

Sally C. Pipes
President
Pacific Research Institute
San Francisco, Calif.

Dignity and Common Sense

I have read each of John O'Sullivan's "From the Editor" columns, and when finished, thought to myself: this man has abundant reservoirs of good sense—until I read "Don't Say It with Flowers" [Feb. 17].

Of course the Flowers affair is important. No man foolish enough to get involved with a Gennifer is presidential material. P. G. Wodehouse put it best: "I can tell you a thing or two. And one of them is that no good can come of association with anything labeled Gwladys or Ysobel or Ethyl or Mabelle or Kathryn." Gennifer, you may have noticed, is not on the list, but I prefer to think that is some sort of scribal error. If Mr. Clinton doesn't realize this instinctively, he's much worse than the ordinary liberal.

John Hutchins
San Diego, Calif.

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Japan and America: Where the Twain Meet

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," Kipling wrote long ago, and even today that saying sums up the feelings of many Americans and Japanese toward each other. But William Brinker, a high school social studies teacher from Farmington Hills, Michigan, disagrees. "The gulf between our cultures exists, but it can be bridged. We just have to work harder at understanding one another."

Brinker was a participant in the annual U.S./Japan Teachers Exchange Program sponsored by Hitachi. Now in its fourth year, this exchange helps promote mutual understanding, cultural awareness, and friendship between our societies on a personal level.

Since 1987, the program has sponsored the visits of 16 American teachers to Japan and five Japanese to the United States. Last year saw the largest exchange so far: four American and three Japanese teachers. For three weeks, they toured the sites, taught children, and lived in the homes of their hosts. For most, it was their first direct exposure to the culture they had so often taught about. Even for Brinker, who had spent time in Japan 36 years ago as a serviceman, the experience was eye-opening. "I came away with a much better understanding of the Japanese people," he says.

As teachers, the American visitors were struck by the way Japanese parents support the school system and the respect students show in the classroom. "The support and love of the family seems to carry out not only in the school system but also into their companies," says Greg Alvarado, a social studies teacher from Daly City, California.

For Delia Grogan-Selby, a department chairperson from Bronxville, New York, the home stay was a highlight of her visit. "I felt like I had parachuted into my own family, but it was Japan," she says.

Hitachi is proud to sponsor the U.S./Japan Teachers Exchange Program. We believe its positive impact will multiply as returning teachers share their personal experiences with students, colleagues, and friends at home.

For more information, write: Hitachi, P.O. Box 7515, Grand Central Station, New York, NY, 10163.

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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FROM THE EDITOR

Simply Killing

■ Murder is becoming so commonplace in New York as to be hardly worth noticing. At least the authorities seem to take that view. *Saturday Night Live* parodied official attitudes only slightly when it had a police spokesman assure viewers that "for every victim of violent crime, four people visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art."

Still, some murders have a pointless fiendishness about them that makes one doubt the very humanity of the killers. Last month, for instance, a young woman store manageress was surprised by an intruder, tied up, and was stabbed and shot while helpless. The same day a city official was mugged on the subway, handed over his money, and was shot anyway.

Maybe the murderers in these cases killed for fun. We have no reason to think the only serial killers are those like Jeffrey Dahmer who obligingly keep the corpses in refigerators for easy checking. On any one day, New York's subways probably contain a dozen or so muggers who have come to enjoy the momentary feeling of total power that murdering a helpless stranger gives them.

They may also be "rational" murderers who have worked out that by killing a victim, they are also killing a witness—and at little or no additional cost. For the penalty for murder, once it has been plea-bargained downward by hard-pressed courts, differs only slightly from that for robbery.

The answer is to raise the cost of murder. Murderers of both kinds will pause before killing if the punishment they risk rises from a short prison sentence to the death penalty. Murder in the course of robbery should therefore carry a mandatory death sentence.

Mandatory? Yes, death must be certain on conviction. There cannot be any exceptions which, by reducing the likelihood of execution, persuade the potential murderer that the odds still favor killing the victim. That would, in my view, reduce the murder rate.

But even if it could be shown that the death penalty has no unique power to deter, I would still favor it. It satisfies our sense of justice that people guilty of especially vile crimes should face especially severe punishments.

■ Is this outlook "uncivilized"? Opponents of the death penalty use the word to signify merely something they don't like, the opposite of a visit to the Metropolitan Museum. But John Sparrow, the Tory wit and Warden of All Souls (who died last month), used to tell the story of two castaways who reach an island where the first sight that greets them is a gallows from which a corpse dangles.

"Thank God," says one of them. "It's a civilized country." Sparrow was not being ironic. He realized that only a civilized country restrains crime by the formal process of legal execution.

In an uncivilized country, the citizens rely upon private force to defend themselves against the lawlessness, daylight robbery, and casual murders fostered by the absence of effective lawful punishments. Although a country may dispense with capital punishment once it considers civilized habits to be so firmly entrenched as not to require such drastic support, a premature move in that direction will be rewarded by a resurgence of barbarity.

New York today makes his point.

■ Britain had its own Jeffrey Dahmer a decade ago in Denis Nielsen, a minor civil servant who picked up young men, took them home, strangled them, propped them up at the table, and chatted to the corpses at meal times.

Was this insanity? Or an extreme way of overcoming British reserve? Nielsen himself was sure he was sane.

When Brian Masters, the author of *Killing for Company*, told him that he was distantly related to Virginia Woolf, the news unsettled him.

"She went mad, you know," said the serial murderer uneasily.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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FOR THE RECORD

■ How will accusations of infidelity and draft dodging hinder performance of front-runner **Bill Clinton**? Unfavorable rating in South has risen since **Gennifer Flowers**'s allegations of 12-year affair, reports *Washington Post*'s **Thomas B. Edsall**. Edsall, however, sees Clinton as only Democrat who has successfully convinced southerners that he's able "to heal past wounds and go back onto the presidential battlefield." Georgia Gov. **Zell Miller** argues: "If [Clinton] does well in New Hampshire, that puts him over the threshold"—i.e., he's considered electable by southern leaders. And with Georgia (March 3), South Carolina (March 7), and Super Tuesday (March 10: Missouri, Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Texas) in near future, a lead going into home territory could seal nomination. . . . Second 15 minutes of fame? **John Doggett**, who thrust himself into **Clarence Thomas** hearings, and who is Yale Law classmate of Clinton, has come out in support of Arkansas governor following Flowers flap. . . . **Paul Tsongas** seems beneficiary of Clinton troubles, but **Richard Nixon** comments: "Tsongas is too responsible to be nominated by the Democrats." . . . **Ralph Nader** is available and hoping for a write-in endorsement as Democratic nominee. Criticizing Republicans and Democrats, Nader insists he is "trying to get the campaign out of the rut, get the press out of the rut, of covering the rut"—something he thinks he's succeeding at, since "we've had the biggest crowds of any candidate by far." . . . Observers note that a majority of polling places now have voting machines, making write-in votes more difficult—supporters of **Mario Cuomo** take note. . . . Meanwhile **Pat Buchanan** stormed through the state like "the pit bull of the Right," according to political columnist **Martin Nolan**, and the Bush campaign "has responded by emptying its kennel of Rottweiler surrogates," meaning **Newt Gingrich** and **William Bennett**, who spoke in New Hampshire. . . . Buchanan has now finalized national-campaign team on strength of support in New Hampshire. Chairman is sister **Bay Buchanan**, veteran treasurer of **Reagan** campaigns, and youngest U.S. Treasurer ever. **Scott MacKenzie**, president of Washington consulting firm, is campaign treasurer; **L. Brent Bozell III**, head of Media Research Center, finance chairman; **Paul Erickson**, national political director. Erickson is a 12-year veteran of past GOP campaigns.

■ London *Sunday Telegraph* reports odd contrast between Clinton–Flowers and its own **Paddy Ashdown** (leader of Liberal Democrats) and **Patricia Howard**, who, unlike America's Flowers, urged Ashdown to button up regarding the couple's brief extramarital fling five years ago. Surprise: Ashdown's poll figures rose after public learned of affair. **Nicholas Farrell** laments blow to British pride: "their Bill Clinton gets the raunchy cabaret artiste, our Paddy Ashdown the modest grandmother." . . . In Commonwealth of Independent States, Russian President **Boris Yeltsin** unilaterally proposed major arms cuts, and **Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov**, armed-forces chief, said this was quite all right because the need for arms hardly existed any more. "As for potential enemies," he declared, "we simply do not have them." . . . Also putting conflict, including the collapse of the worldwide but locally based BCCI, behind him, the **Sultan of Abu Dhabi** plans to build a Persian Gulf Disneyland at cost of $2.5 billion on coastal island named "Lulu," which means pearl. It will be the Gulf's biggest entertainment complex. . . . In Rome, medical student **Alessandra Mussolini**, granddaughter of the dictator, is running for parliament in April. Alessandra, member of the neo-Fascist MSI, says that "there is now a reassessment of how much grandpa **Benito** did for Italy." . . . "Sorry ladies," 62-year-old PLO leader **Yasir Arafat** wed 28-year-old secretary, comments *Saturday Night Live*'s **Kevin Nealon**. . . . Author **Jack Koehler** presented **Ronald Reagan** with pleasant birthday surprise: ninety-page *Stasi* top-secret file of KGB and Cuban intelligence reports on Reagan. 1988 files paint former President as "firm and unbending politician for whom words and deeds are the same" and as man who will regain U.S. power internationally, which, files say, were lost during **Carter** years.

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"I'm sorry, Reverend, the law does not allow stained-glass side windows."

■ New York Conservatives favor **Dennis Shea**, former counsel to Senator **Bob Dole**, against Democratic Party regular **Tom Manton** in this year's congressional race. . . . In Oregon, sore-pressed Republican Sen. **Robert Packwood** faces primary threat from anti-abortion attorney **John DeZell**, and may be further menaced by a third-party pro-life candidate. Observers think that Packwood will have tough going against Democratic opponents in any case.

■ *St. Paul's Family Magazine* of Christian culture, published quarterly, enters its eighth year of publication. For info: 14780 West 159th St., Olathe, Kansas 66062. . . . Institute of World Politics, in partnership with Boston University, will offer four intensive evening courses in Washington, D.C., on critical foreign-policy topics. Guest faculty include **Robert Conquest**, **Richard Pipes**, **Edwin Feulner**, and **Paula Dobriansky**. For info write or call the Institute at 1420 16th Street, N.W., Washington D.C., 20036 202-462-2101.

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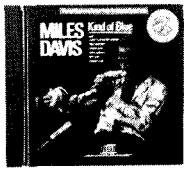

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THE WEEK

■ Ronald Reagan has endorsed George Bush for 1992, and we understand, but extremism in observance of the Eleventh Commandment is no virtue.

■ The conduct of conservative leaders stumping New Hampshire for George Bush has so far observed the decencies. Jack Kemp refused to read Pat Buchanan out of the human race, despite his disagreements with him on protectionism and isolationism. "I'm not up here against Pat," Kemp has said, "I'm up here for George Bush and Dan Quayle." Better to be polite than not. But politeness alone cannot resolve the anomaly of Kemp's position as a conservative champion in an un-conservative Administration. President Bush "has given me a tremendous opportunity to travel the country and work on reforming the welfare system," said the HUD Secretary. "If I didn't do what I'm doing, I think it would be a stain on Jack Kemp far greater than coming up here." It would indeed be a far greater stain if what the country most needed at this moment were a welfare reformer at HUD. But when the economy is a mess, when foreign policy lacks direction, when the case against affirmative action was surrendered in signing the quota (i.e., civil-rights) bill, then what is needed is a challenge from the Right, not a radical reforming HUD Secretary.

■ The news is that John Sununu will replace Pat Buchanan on *Crossfire*. The rumor is that Sununu is holding the job until George Bush is free to take it.

■ For the Left, the ultimate disaster of modern times was Ronald Reagan's 1980 electoral victory, followed as it was by the success of his policies and the still-growing popularity of his principles. It is understandable that some would like to show that: Reagan cheated, can we please go back now? Whether the charges are made sincerely or simply in the hopes that mud might stick hardly matters. Conspiracy theories, whether of the Elders of Zion, Eisenhower the Communist, or the CIA spreading AIDS or killing JFK, are the most telling sign of irrelevance in American politics. That both houses of Congress are now investigating the "October Surprise" simply confirms the sorry state of those institutions, just as the remarkable credulity of many in the media to the charges attests to reactionary (back-to-the-Sixties!) sentiments. Some decades back, *NR* repudiated the Birchers because their fantasies harmed conservatism, anti-Communism, and America. We advise the responsible Left, assuming such, to get busy.

■ Cindy Adams, the doughty gossip columnist of the *New York Post*, has produced an interview with one Lauren Kirk, an entertainer-turned-realtor, who says she shared an apartment in Dallas from 1983 to 1985 with Gennifer Flowers, and that Flowers entertained Bill Clinton there three times. Cindy Adams may not be David Broder, but she is no supermarket chronicler of Elvis sightings either. And under the rules established in the Clarence Thomas–Anita Hill row, Miss Kirk's statement counts as "corroboration" of Miss Flowers's allegations and thus evidence that "He Lied." Clinton could have avoided such follow-up stories, as we suggested in the last issue, by refusing to speak at all, or by coming clean. He chose instead to play it down the middle, incidentally denying the Flowers story. Will the rest of the press test this challenge to his word? If it doesn't, it would not be the first time the media moderated a Democrat's distress: in 1984, most of the media called off its investigations of the mob ties of John Zaccaro, Mr. Geraldine Ferraro, when they seemed to threaten his wife's place in the history books. Maybe Kirk is embroidering, and Clinton telling the truth. But we won't know unless the big feet follow in Cindy Adams's footsteps.

■ So this woman says Cuomo is probably a Mafioso, and then this presidential candidate, he kind of laughs and says yeah, he sure acts like one, and then Cuomo, he says this is, quote, "part of an ugly syndrome that strikes Italian-Americans, Jewish people, blacks, women, all the different people and ethnic groups." He's right. You shouldn't generalize. Everybody generalizes too much. And you shouldn't exaggerate. That's what gets everybody killed.

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"I may be overdrawn, but I'm expecting an electoral bribe very shortly."

■ And the winner is . . . actually, four of the nearly fifty plans submitted to Elmo Crump's Soviet Privatization Contest were deemed prize worthy by NA-

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TIONAL REVIEW's economics analyst, Ed Rubenstein. The lucky foursome, in no particular order: J. William Brosius of Frederick, Maryland—identified the proper techniques for setting prices on privatized property; Barry R. Kelley of Tempe, Arizona—he was the only one to ask, and answer, the question of what the republics should do with the proceeds from privatization; John S. P. Robson of Toronto, Canada—his draft constitution addressed many of the legal and fairness issues that will accompany privatization; and Douglas Glover of Fort Collins, Colorado, whose detailed privatization plan would streamline the process. The winners will be flown to Moscow for a round of vodkas with Boris Yeltsin, or will share equally in the $1,000 prize money donated by Mr. Crump. Whichever comes first.

■ In the rape trial of boxer Mike Tyson, lawyers for the defense called a long list of witnesses to testify that the defendant was a disgusting, foul-mouthed, depraved animal. Mr. Tyson himself took the stand to cement the impression, stating that he had used an appropriate Anglo-Saxon term, as a transitive verb, in seeking a social engagement with the object of the verb. Once upon a time, the defendant's lawyers would have tried to portray their client as a man of good character who would never stoop to such an act. Now they portray him as a man so feverishly eager to stoop that the woman must have known it, hence given her implicit consent. Life has not been the same since the liberals discovered sex.

■ Professional protester Daniel F. Berrigan turned up recently at a demonstration outside a Planned Parenthood office in Rochester, N.Y., earning himself a conviction for trespass and very likely the displeasure of old friends on the Left. "I was fairly anxious not to appear as an anti-abortionist but someone who can speak for the . . . metaphor of the seamless garment of life," Father Berrigan told the *New York Times* apologetically. Such an exemplary record—years of chaining himself to power-plant gates, splattering blood on military cargo, staging sit-ins, lie-ins, shout-ins. Why did it have to end like *this*?

Unfinished Business

Like exterminators who
Spray but fail to follow through
Underneath the kitchen sink,
Mr. Bush's allies blink
As Saddam Hussein's approach
Mimics a resistant roach.

W. H. VON DREELE

■ Recently opened Argentine files reveal that Dr. Mengele spent his postwar years giving abortions. We see a certain continuity here, but would NOW argue he deserved time-off for community service?

■ A San Francisco mugger who beat and robbed a Japanese tourist has been awarded $24,595 in damages against the taxidriver who pinned him to a wall with his cab until police arrived. The reaction of the Japanese parliament will be a) predictable and b) hard to argue with.

Mr. Buchanan's Choice

MOST READERS of this editorial have an advantage over its writer. They will know the results of the New Hampshire primary when they read it. But whether Pat Buchanan has done well or badly—and we hazard the guess that he will have done well—our judgment about his role in the future of American conservatism will be largely unaffected. A good result for Mr. Buchanan will increase his influence, a poor one diminish it. But the key question is how he will seek to use that influence from now on. He can try to reshape the Right, or he can help reshape American politics as a whole. At present he seems to want to reshape the Right. Mr. Buchanan presents himself as the heir of Ronald Reagan seeking to claim an inheritance that is being quarreled over and squandered by a variety of villains, but in particular President Bush and the neoconservatives. He would drive these usurpers from the family mansion and restore the values which previously enabled the estate to flourish.

There is enough truth in this parable to make it plausible. Mr. Bush has indeed squandered the legacy of Reaganomics, and the economy and the Republican Party are in a state of disrepair as a result. But other elements in it—Mr. Buchanan's credentials as natural heir, the picture of neoconservatives as usurpers—invite a more skeptical consideration.

Mr. Buchanan's principles, for instance, are soundly Reaganite on such matters as taxes, spending, welfare, quotas, and crime. Because this list accounts for most great political issues, and because Mr. Bush is *un*sound on them, NATIONAL REVIEW urged a tactical vote for the challenger in New Hampshire. But there are other topics on which Mr. Buchanan departs from any kind of Reaganism. Ronald Reagan intervened repeatedly in the Third World to protect U.S. interests broadly defined; he built up American military power in such a way as to extend the possibilities of such intervention; he was the postwar President most committed to the alliance with Israel; he justified U.S. foreign policy as one based on spreading democratic values (we our-

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selves have some sympathy with Mr. Buchanan's skepticism on this account); and while he prudently yielded some ground to a protectionist Congress, he defended free trade in theory and practice. On these, Mr. Buchanan marches to a different drummer.

His flirting with protectionism is perhaps the single issue that has most disturbed conservatives. Not only has it clouded his claims to Reaganite legitimacy; it is enticing him into a demagogic, and ultimately socialist, approach to economic policy.

THAT SAID, there is much in Mr. Buchanan's argument, as elaborated in his *Human Events* interview, that we can endorse. He is right to argue for less domestic regulations—and to urge Detroit to abandon union feather-bedding and restrictive practices—in order to improve American chances in competitive trade. He is right to point to the human pains of economic change. And if he were to propose alleviating those pains by measures to help workers adjust to change, he would meet his main purpose and improve the functioning of the U.S. economy in one move. He is right to ask Japan to open its markets (though the beneficiaries would overwhelmingly be the Japanese). And if he were to take up the concept of an Atlantic Free Trade Area—advocated by, among others, Richard Nixon in this issue—he would be advancing free trade, fostering stronger U.S. links with a part of the world that has a $20-billion trade deficit with *us*, and urging the creation of a trading unit of such wealth and size that it could virtually dictate an open-door policy to Japan. Again, all in one move.

His economic-nationalist noises make protectionism seem more irresistible and Mr. Bush the truer heir of President Reagan on trade policy. Of course, the more irresistible protectionism looks, the less of a free trader Mr. Bush is likely to prove. But is that an achievement of which Mr. Buchanan could really be proud?

That brings us to a second aspect of the Reagan legacy. President Reagan was a statesman of large and generous vision. Like all politicians, he exploited popular resentments on occasion, but such resentments were never the sum of his appeal. He advocated a political and economic liberty that would bring prosperity to all. And the rise in prosperity it achieved was so inclusive and so dramatic that Mr. Reagan lived to see liberty adopted in the very capital of its enemy.

We need today a similarly generous vision that explains the great changes of the last two years, and promises to shape a better future. Mr. Bush, a competent manager whose vision is the *status quo* with happier losers, is simply not up to the task. Mr. Buchanan has so far limited his own appeal to exploiting people's grievances. There are a lot of grievances around at present, and an insurgent politician can hardly refrain from exploiting some of them. But even his old boss President Nixon was careful to add a dash of uplift to the brew. If Mr. Buchanan is to imitate the Gipper, he must unite Americans on the basis of a hopeful idealism.

At present—and this is the third departure from Mr. Reagan's practice—he is dividing conservatives. The former President had enemies on the Right, of course, but he was careful never to notice them, invariably directing his fire leftward. He understood very well that conservatism is a broad church in which social conservatives, the New Right, economic supply-siders, neoconservatives, libertarians, and Burkean traditionalists all have their pews. All that he asked for was observance of the Eleventh Commandment, so that they might discuss their differences in an eirenic spirit. As a result he won two victories in the fruits of which all of these groups shared—supply-siders getting tax cuts, social conservatives judicial appointments, neoconservatives a defense build-up, and so on.

But Mr. Buchanan regards neoconservatives as domestic liberals and thus heretics. As an ideological judgment, this is simply wrong. It is absurd to characterize as liberal James Q. Wilson on crime, Charles Murray on welfare, Midge Decter on feminism, Richard Neuhaus on the role of religion in public life, William Bennett on education, Samuel Lipman on the NEA, or Irving Kristol on anything. And the political strategy it implies—driving the neoconservatives out of the movement—is self-defeating. It would reduce the size and appeal of the conservative coalition, and concentrate public attention on its divisions. Even supposing Mr. Buchanan's success in this (which is very doubtful), the price of a narrower conservatism would be continued liberal dominance. Reshaping the Right in his own image, he would enable liberal Democrats to reshape America in theirs.

MR. BUCHANAN, as yet, is far from being the heir of Reagan. Could he earn that title? In challenging an incumbent President when others faltered, he has shown the necessary courage. He has the private geniality that, if extended to his public personality, would help hold together a heterogeneous coalition. He has a better grasp of issues and more natural authority than any of the Democrats running. But he has all of the negatives discussed above.

What he would have to do, in essence, is cease to be a commentator and become a political leader. He would have to learn to blur ideological differences with allies, not sharpen them; to make overtures to those he has offended even if he believes himself to be the offended party—it is he, after all, who wants to be President; and to develop on Mr. Reagan's foundations a new vision that can unite the conservative coalition, appeal to a majority of Ameri-

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cans, and provide the basis for American leadership of the West at a time when all three are troubled, drifting and riven by conflict.

A tall order for anyone—but Reagan's heir must do what Reagan did.

Healthy Competition

WHILE STEPPING in the right direction, President Bush's health-care plan falls disappointingly short of the *perestroika* America's health-care system needs. The Administration would give poor families a medical-insurance voucher worth $3,750, and medical-insurance tax deductions worth nearly as much to families with incomes of up to $80,000. That would enable the nation's medical have-nots to purchase a basic health-insurance package, and—because most beneficiaries will pay for at least *some* health costs out of their own pocket—restore market incentives.

By severing the link between insurance coverage and place of employment, the Bush plan would also assuage the fear many employees have of changing jobs. The benefits will be more than medical. Unfettered freedom of workers to seek better pay, and companies more productive workers, is a *sine qua non* of an efficient free-enterprise system.

But the health crisis stems equally from those who have too much medical insurance, and pay little or nothing for it. A major reason for rising health-care costs is that employees of large corporations are compensated with generous, tax-exempt medical plans. With health care paid for by the employer, neither employees nor their doctors have reason to mind costs. The result: gold-plated corporate health plans that cover everything from Shiatsu massage to herbal remedies, and corporations that now devote an average of 56 per cent of their pre-tax profits to health care, as against 8 per cent in 1965.

By ignoring the problem of company-sponsored plans, the Administration missed a crucial cost-control lever. A reform package, such as was recently outlined by the Heritage Foundation, would replace tax-exempt corporate plans with a universal system of tax credits similar to those the Administration has proposed for the uninsured. Employees would be required to purchase a basic health-insurance policy, but beyond that they could keep any part of the credit not spent on health care. Since insurance companies would then have an incentive to offer health plans costing less than the credit in order to gain customers, it would serve both to control costs and to spur efficiency. Best of all, this extension of the Bush plan wouldn't require additional taxes: the credit would be financed with revenues from now untaxed corporate health benefits.

The liberal alternative—pay or play—would require businesses either to provide some level of health coverage or to pay 6 to 7 per cent of payroll to the government, which would provide the coverage. This scheme would probably collapse into a Medicare-type federal-insurance system for businesses (more would pay than play), in which cost controls would be absent. The prospect of paying the "pay or play" payroll tax has intimidated many businessmen into supporting nationalized health care.

The argument for socialized medicine is a statistical illusion: in 1990 Canada spent $1,481 per capita on its centralized, government-run health-insurance system, while total health-care spending in the U.S. came to $2,659 per capita. The apparent cost advantage reflects differences in demography rather than in the modes of delivery: Canada is a younger country with proportionately less of the inner-city health problems that afflict us. Even the much-touted administrative cost savings claimed for Canada's single-payer system appear, as Jacques Krasny pointed out in our last issue, to be a statistical mirage.

The Bush plan avoids both the bureaucratically imposed rationing of a nationalized system, and the economically burdensome taxation of pay or play. An ideal plan would have allowed individuals to self insure with medical IRA accounts. The $100-billion cost could—and should—have been defrayed, dollar for dollar, by taxing employees on the value of their employer-provided health plans. But despite its shortcomings, the Bush plan is superior to every other proposal under consideration in Washington.

Bush: Man without a Plan

HOW DO WE help the economy? Let us count the ways: tax breaks for homebuyers, students, investors, families with children, corporations, etc. A spending speed-up, followed by a budget freeze. Reductions in taxes withheld, followed by higher tax payments next April.

The President rattled off almost thirty programs in his State of the Union speech. But there was no underlying theme or theory, no acknowledgement that the simple prescriptions that worked so well for Ronald Reagan—lower taxes, deregulation, restraints on spending, and stable, non-inflationary monetary policy—are relevant during this time of never-ending recession. The man who had just discussed the changes "of Biblical proportions" unfolding in the international arena ran flat out of the vision thing when speaking about the economy.

Economists were understandably disappointed by the President's confusing and contradictory message. On the Left, Robert Solow, a Nobel Prize–winning economist from MIT, while applauding the break for

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first-time homebuyers, noted that "it doesn't speak to any clear vision of wanting to do anything systematic about the economy." Chicago-based economist Robert Genetski found glimmers in the capital-gains proposal and the ninety-day regulatory breather, and nothing but "excess baggage or outright economic garbage" in the rest of the program.

Another economist who isn't fooled by presidential PR is the President's own Michael Boskin. Readers of last year's *Economic Report of the President* were assured that the $300-billion-plus deficit projected for 1991 was the result of special factors, including the recession and S&L bailout. Readers of this year's report, prepared by the Council of Economic Advisors under Mr. Boskin, will find no detailed analysis of the deficit whatever. The recession is no longer a "special factor," and medium-term economic prospects no longer permit the usual prognosis of budgetary balance within five years. Indeed, Mr. Boskin fails to explain how the President's tax package will raise growth by as much as the 0.4 percentage points claimed for it over the medium term.

Mr. Boskin's report quickly turned to happier matters, easily debunking the claims that incomes of middle-class Americans stagnated during the Reagan years. The poorest fifth, the middle fifth, manufacturing workers, and even high-school dropouts, enjoyed higher real income in 1990 than in 1980.

These gains were the result of fundamental changes that fit into a coherent world view. Ronald Reagan had no laundry list; he had big ideas.

Desert Replay

IN VIEW of Saddam Hussein's continued defiance of UN resolutions calling for the dismantling of Iraq's nuclear and chemical capabilities, the UN Security Council has rightly decided to maintain economic sanctions against Iraq. More or less simultaneously, a Middle Eastern tour by CIA Director Robert Gates was widely reported to be part of an effort to bring the dictator down. The urgency is real. Reports suggest Saddam, evading UN inspectors and sanctions, is actively reconstituting his nuclear and other military programs. The Administration deserves support for any measures it takes to put an end to that threat, from covert action to undermine the regime all the way to military action to head off an Iraqi nuclear or chemical warhead.

NR predicted a year ago that the Administration would regret its failure to press its advantage then. The lesson is proved: Once you permit a rogue regime to survive, you face endless challenges and crises. Saddam's grip on power was less sure then than it is now; to dislodge him now will take more of an effort than it would have taken then.

There are interesting parallels with two other challenges that ominously and simultaneously bear down on the President even as the election campaign sours the political atmosphere. One is the threat from North Korea; the other is a festering problem with Libya. North Korea, like Iraq, is strongly suspected of driving toward a nuclear-weapons capability, though it is probably not as far along as Iraq. The key question is whether and when it is going to start up a reprocessing plant, in violation of several of its recent assurances.

After six years of delay, North Korea signed an accord on January 30 with the International Atomic Energy Agency agreeing in principle to international inspection of its facilities; but then it announced that the accord needed to be approved by that well-known deliberative body, the North Korean parliament. The stalling, in other words, continues, as does presumably the weapons research. The United States is trying to hold together a shaky coalition including China and Japan; whether we would have unanimous support for military action *in extremis* is even less sure than in the Iraqi case. But can we permit a North Korean nuclear bomb, with its destabilizing effects on not only South Korea but also Japan?

In Libya, the issue is slightly different. We have so far relied upon legal and diplomatic channels to pursue two individual Libyans whom a brilliant forensic investigation has linked to the Lockerbie bombing of Pan Am 103. But Qaddafi is refusing to turn them over to British and American authorities. Our legalistic approach has left him room for maneuver: If he disposes of the two goons by a "trial" (press reports suggest he may have already executed them), the core issue will remain unaddressed—namely, the 100 per cent certainty that their terrorism was sponsored and managed by the Libyan regime. And despite indignant words from the UN Security Council, the likelihood of a truly strong American action against Libya seems to be receding.

Diplomacy has its uses. It is worthwhile in keeping an international coalition together as long as it is accomplishing the objective. But in each and all of these cases, President Bush sooner or later—maybe sooner—will face the stark decision of whether to take drastic actions that he knows are indispensable, with or without international applause. Or else—our policy fails. We know from Desert Shield and Desert Storm that sometimes the visible demonstration of American determination helps galvanize international support. If we want a satisfactory outcome, on the other hand, the President must use all the means at his disposal, unilaterally if necessary. He must not be deterred by those who claim it will be (or will be seen to be) electorally motivated. If he does the right thing, he will have our wholehearted support and, we are sure, that of the American people.

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Russian Roulette

THE FEBRUARY 9 demonstrations in Moscow against Boris Yeltsin and his reform plan received wide press coverage in the West. Whether it was just their inherent newsworthiness or a certain *schadenfreude* on the part of Western media that still hadn't gotten over their love affair with Mikhail Gorbachev was hard to tell. In any event, the precariousness both of Yeltsin's reforms and of his political position is obvious, and only magnifies the dilemma for the West.

In previous editorials, we too have voiced our doubts about whether Yeltsin's reforms go far enough to work and, by extension, whether Western aid is justified. All the flaws of "foreign aid" are well known to conservatives. Where billions of dollars flowed into developing countries in support of statist economic structures to uplift pre-modern societies, the results were predictably dismal. But the Russian situation arguably falls somewhere in between that case (where the requisite social maturity didn't exist) and the Marshall Plan case, where the basic conditions for social and economic recovery were indeed in existence. What the Russians lack are economic institutions like a banking system, certain business skills in management and accounting, and the habits of enterprise which for seventy years were banished to the interstices of the black market. They enjoy certain advantages—a well-educated labor force, a middle class, a high level of technological competence, and even an intelligentsia that is less nihilistic than most (see "Without Marx or Chekhov," page 43). So, there is some chance they will succeed, provided their leaders are bold and wise *and* they receive some outside help to get them over the immediate pains of economic reform.

Where Gorbachev did not deserve Western aid—and we said so clearly—Yeltsin does. This is the view of former dissidents like Gary Kasparov, who make a case for debt relief as the quicker and most effective form of help. The Administration is plugging away at putting together a stabilization fund to bolster the currency, some time this spring, in cooperation with the IMF. This is all well and good (Poland had such a fund in place on the day it launched its reforms), but time is of the essence. The problem is not only the danger of a political upheaval. There are also compelling reasons of foreign policy. We agree with the Center for Security Policy that, given the sharp decline in oil exports and Gorbachev's unconscionable squandering of gold reserves, the new states in the absence of debt relief may be driven to step up arms sales as their only source of large-scale foreign exchange.

Western aid of whatever kind should, of course, be conditional upon both foreign-policy concessions such as nuclear build-down and upon an accelerated program of privatization (which is, anyway, needed for Yeltsin's price reform to succeed). The aid would help Russia's democrats directly, and the conditions indirectly—by making plain that an anti-Yeltsin coup would halt assistance. That said, no one can be confident that aid to the semi-post-socialist economies of the new Commonwealth of Independent States will have the desired results. With the stakes so high, however, the effort must be made. If we cannot distinguish between aiding run-of-the-mill Third World deadbeats and a historic juncture when European stability is hanging in the balance, we shouldn't be in the business of foreign policy at all.

So Guilty They're Innocent

A STRANGE new twist is appearing in criminal law. Famous defendants are trying to use their own guilt to prove their innocence: a sort of reverse character defense.

The pioneering verdict here was the acquittal of John Hinckley for the attempted murder of Ronald Reagan on grounds of insanity. Hinckley's (and, incidentally, Mike Tyson's) lawyer, Vincent Fuller, brilliantly invented a legal loophole. It was quite clear that Hinckley had known what he was doing, knew it was wrong as well as illegal, and had planned the act carefully. But shooting a President to impress an actress was undeniably a flaky act. Fuller argued that the law required the state to prove not only that Hinckley had done the deed (which was not in question), but that he was sane—beyond a reasonable doubt. Nobody is sane beyond a reasonable doubt, except Reagan himself.

How far can this logic be stretched? We may find out in the trial of Jeffrey Dahmer, the Milwaukee anthropophagite. Dahmer's lawyer argues that his cannibal-murders are themselves proof of his innocence: only an insane man would do such things. That sort of thinking has come to sound plausible,

Lese Majesty

On TV, with a candor that
Left Evans stroking his cravat
While Novak's jaw descended to
A level almost out of view,
Jack Kemp (hereafter, Beanstalk Jack)
Deployed his snickersnee to hack
Tax gimmicks on the budget tree
George Bush still waters lovingly.

W. H. VON DREELE

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but its obvious terminus is summed up well by Charles Krauthammer: "It is absurd to permit the heinousness of a crime to become self-acquitting. That sets up a perverse standard: the more terrible the crime, the crazier, therefore the less culpable the criminal. The man who commits incomprehensible torture is acquitted. The father who steals bread to feed his children is convicted."

To which it must now be added that incomprehensible torture has become more common in America than stealing bread to feed children. The mind shrinks even from extending empathy to such acts as Dahmer's. The same is true of many less bizarre atrocities, like the random killings and gang rapes that are everyday occurrences in our cities. These don't strike us as mere extensions of our ordinary temptations to revenge and cruelty, but as something beyond words—as the witches in *Macbeth* say, "a deed without a name." Each atrocity seems uniquely evil; but why are there so many of them?

We don't know, except that what we call "society" is less inclusive than we thought. A disturbing number of people are now spiritually outside it and willing to do whatever they can get away with, reveling in sins that for most of us aren't even temptations. The rap group Geto Boys performs a new ditty celebrating the imagined rape, murder, and posthumous rape of a white woman who pleads for her life. Respectable opinion pauses, is briefly shocked, then moves on to more palatable topics, shrugging helplessly because censorship is now the ultimate "obscenity," and there is nothing to be done. In the meantime, another pop group arrives seeking fame by breaking the next taboo—an increasingly difficult psycho-sexual feat—and more poison is pumped into our unresisting bloodstream.

How can society cope with this amazing animus in our culture? It's futile to write off the criminals as insane. Most of them know what they're doing. Even Dahmer had enough sense to hide his deeds: that should be evidence enough of sanity for the law. But the law and society are suffering from an enervated inability to test the utility of political principles against their consequences in real life and real death. It is a quieter form of insanity—but perhaps no less deadly in the long run.

Darman, Muffled

Unlikely as a hunter,
  And with no central core,
What Skinner has accomplished
  Through interoffice war
Deserves the service medal
  Conservatives bestow
When wishy-washy staffers
  Bring tax assessors low.

W. H. VON DREELE

The Haitian Problem

THE plight of the Haitian boat people fleeing to the U.S. is one of those occasions when common sense seems heartless. But it remains common sense. The Bush Administration has acted defensibly in deciding to reject would-be immigrants who fled to Guantanamo.

Some of the Haitians qualify as bona-fide political refugees, targeted for individual persecution and eligible for U.S. protection. But mere residence in Haiti is another matter. The Haitian junta is no doubt a beastly regime, the Uganda of the Western hemisphere, in which government soldiers are virtually licensed to shoot at anything that annoys them. Even to live under such random terror makes one, in some sense, a political victim. The personal stories of the Haitians in Guantanamo range from pitiful to frightening. Otherwise they wouldn't be there.

But to live under a tyranny can't be held to constitute a claim to American residence. That would oblige the United States to take in the entire populations of Haiti and Cuba, for openers. It's possible that some interim arrangements could be made to accommodate those who have already left, until their safe return to Haiti can be assured. But in life it's sometimes necessary to drawn firm, if arbitrary, lines.

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

In your recent column praising Milton Friedman [*NR*, Feb. 17] you mention Adam Smith's discussion of entrepreneurs' "animal spirits." The full quote is: "A large proportion of our positive actions depend on spontaneous optimism rather than on a mathematical expectation, whether moral or hedonistic or economic. Most, probably of our decisions to do something positive, the full consequences of which will be drawn out over many days to come, can only be taken as a result of animal spirits—of a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction, and not as the outcome of a weighted average of quantitative benefits multiplied by quantitative probabilities. . . . Only a little more than an expedition to the South Pole, is [enterprise] based on an exact calculation of benefits to come. Thus if the animal spirits are dimmed and the spontaneous optimism falters, leaving us to depend on nothing but a mathematical expectation, enterprise will fade and die." Unfortu-

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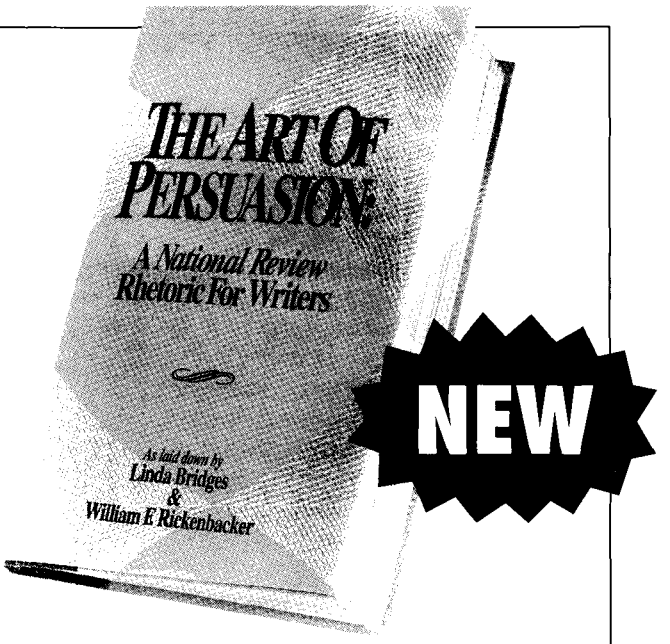
Read. Read this book. Read this book and you won't write like this.



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—GEORGE F. WILL

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—JAMES J. KILPATRICK

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nately for your desire to appear as a bona-fide conservative, this is from John Maynard Keynes's *General Theory*, not Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

Some time ago Dr. Friedman reread Keynes and found more wisdom there than appears among his so-called Keynesian followers. Perhaps you would find the same.

Sincerely yours,
Robert Vienneau
Rome, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Vienneau: Drat! Because I know that Keynes quote. And the fault was not Mr. Friedman's. He said Keynes, I miswrote Smith. Thanks for reminding me of that striking passage. You are welcome to reproduce it and send it to all Democratic legislators. Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

As your readers probably know, there is a battle being waged on campuses across the nation. Such cherished notions as morality, truth, and reason are under siege. What people may not know, however, is that on many campuses, dedicated students are fighting back with highly effective political journals. Almost sixty of these publications nationwide compose what is known as the Collegiate Network (CN), administered by the Madison Center for Educational Affairs in Washington, D.C. (some CN publications were mentioned in the December 30 issue of *NR*). This valuable resource provides money, support, and guidance for conservative publications that are almost always engaged in an uphill battle.

Although such efforts are successful on campus, politically correct professors and administrators are doing their best to keep conservative alumni at a safe distance from the new orthodox regimes of academia. A recent *Amherst College Alumni Quarterly* featured only one article on political correctness, in which a professor essentially denied its existence at Amherst. I know from experience that her assertions are false, but no viewpoint to that effect was presented to the alumni. If conservative students can't reach alumni, maybe alumni can reach them.

By contacting the Madison Center at the address below, alumni can find out if their alma mater has a CN member. By getting in touch with current students, alumni can play an active and positive role in the life of their school. Support will be greatly appreciated.

Here's the address: The Madison Center for Educational Affairs, 1112 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Robert Witwer
Editor, *The Amherst Spectator*
Amherst, Mass.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

Our client, Michael Krafft, a European ship owner, asked us to relay to you his shock over the recent decision by a federal district court in St. Louis, Judge Clyde Cahill presiding, that Mr. Krafft's Miami shipping company, and his sailing clipper ships, the largest ever built, may not use the term "clipper" in their names. Mr. Krafft's company, Star Clippers, Inc., had been sued by the St. Louis cruise company, Clipper Cruise Lines, Inc., operators of motor-driven, shallow-draft luxury vessels.

Mr. Krafft is very anxious to make known his bafflement at court action that departs from a tradition of 150 years . . everywhere, of the term "clipper." That term had been coined originally to describe the high-speed sail vessels of the mid nineteenth century. His ships are based on those designs. One recently has entered cruise service in the Caribbean, the second was launched last fall in Belgium.

Cordially yours,
Alan Bell
Robert Kneeley & Co.
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Dear Mr. Bell: Sounds very odd. I can't imagine that the word "clipper" is copyrighted, though odd ownerships abound. Did you know you can't write "band-aid," you have to say "Band-Aid"—because the Johnson Company so to speak owns the name? Copyright laws are very funny and not entirely predictable. When this magazine was preparing to launch, its name was *National Weekly*. But the SecState, New York, said: No. That name transgressed on the rights of a journal called *National Liquor Weekly*. We were so disgusted by the whole experience we threw away the *Weekly* and became a fortnightly. Good luck. Cordially, **—WFB**

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ON THE SCENE

Not Kafkaesque

WILLIAM McGURN

John Michaud

PRAGUE

TWO HOURS after darkness has dropped its magical cloak over this city of cobbled streets, church spires, and fairy-tale castles, I find myself outside a new restaurant just outside the city center. "Private," says our Czech host. I've been here less than a full day, but it doesn't take a Milton Friedman to grasp the distinction immediately.

Our group is with the National Forum Foundation, and along with the Prague-based Civic Institute we are dining with representatives from three major publications—*Respekt*, *Lidovy Noviny*, and *Cesky Denik*—on the eve of workshops designed to help the fledgling Czechoslovak press commercialize. Between business I put to them a favorite question from my days as a foreign correspondent: what do they think of foreign coverage of their nation? As usual it provokes quite a response. Most express amusement at the inevitable occurence of the adjective "Kafkaesque." Others cite an obsession with Alexander Dubcek, whose "Communism with a human face" ended with Soviet tanks rolling through Prague in 1968. Mary Batata is singled out for her articles on the "persecution" of former members of the STB, or secret police. "She writes such stupid things I cannot believe the *New York Times* can publish them," says one young editor, stubbing his cigarette. Price of freedom, old boy.

Over drinks the conversation drifts to the two issues on everybody's mind: first, the fate of privatization in Czechoslovakia; second, the fate of Czechoslovakia in Czechoslovakia. That's not surprising, for the country is about to embark on an ambitious privatization initiative aimed at large state industries at the same time it finds itself in the thick of a constitutional crisis testing whether the hyphenated nation that came together in 1918 will stick together today. And the ultimate outcome of each depends on the other. What makes the situation unique is that the Communists here have cleverly chosen to make their stand under the cover of nationalism.

"The so-called nationalists are Communists who want to preserve their power and who see privatization as the last nail in their coffin," says Martin Weiss, editorial-page editor of *Cesky Denik* (*The Czech Daily*). "This is not Yugoslavia or the USSR."

It's not really Eastern Europe, either. Physically closer to even Dublin than to Moscow, Prague has always been the most Western-looking of the Warsaw Pact capitals. Between the wars, it was one of the most prosperous places on earth, and Habsburg domination happily left it without the class divisions of, say, Poland. Although it had its share of burnings-at-the-stake and what-have-you, religious tolerance came early, and even in the midst of the current troubles the country is remarkable for the absence of the terrorism and violence that plagues France as much as Yugoslavia. Unlike neighbors such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia enjoyed a generation of democracy from its incorporation in 1918. And it was spared the worst ravages of World War II.

But the most striking anomaly is the curious relationship between nationalism and Communism. In most places the clash is between a Marxist center bent on imposing its will by force and constituent states or republics which want change. In Czechoslovakia, nationalism by and large means Slovak nationalism, and the ideological divisions are reversed. Although the Slovak capital of Bratislava saw the first anti-Communist demonstrations of the Velvet Revolution, except for the Catholic underground and a few scattered individualists, Slovakians did not contribute much to the dissident movement. Consequently, Slovakian nationalism has less to do with legitimate questions of autonomy than with a naked attempt by Party operatives to capitalize (no pun intended) on the short-term hardships wrought by economic reform and long-simmering local grievances to recapture power and retard economic liberalization.

The divide is reflected in age divisions. While not quite the "Don't trust anyone over thirty" ethic of the American Sixties, there exists a palpable suspicion of anyone whose age makes them part of the old system. In other words, to be reactionary in today's Czechoslovakia is to be Communist, and sure enough I see no gray hairs on these new editors and publishers. Even the waifish chambermaid at our pension allows that she is a fan of the reforms of the libertarian finance minister, Vaclav Klaus. "We think this is the way to make our country rich."

This is precisely what Slovak na-

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tionalists fear, which is why they keep threatening to separate. But the aim seems more to gain concessions than secure a divorce, if only because Slovak politicos know that without the federal budget (of which they receive half despite having only a third of the population) they would be stuck. Adding to the frustration is that Slovakia was the site of much of the arms production during Communist days, and it resents both the fuss over recent tank sales to Syria as well as Prague's ban on future deals. For his part President Vaclav Havel says that if the Slovaks really want to go they won't be stopped, and in fact it was the Slovak nationalists who in January rejected the president's proposal to put the issue up to a referendum—no doubt well aware of pols that show 59 per cent of the Slovak population in favor of union. "Bratislava is our problem," says Karol Horvath, 33-year-old editor of the Slovakian weekly *Priekopnik* (*Pioneer*). "The farther away from the Slovakian capital you get, the less popular the nationalists."

All this comes to a head just three days after *NR* goes to press, when the Slovakian parliament will debate the kind of arrangement they aim to have with the Czechs. Ivan Lamper of the weekly paper *Respekt*, the *World Press Review*'s international editor of the year, tells me that he can't even explain the details in Czech, let alone English, so I don't feel so guilty. The gist of it seems to be that Slovak nationalists are contending that no federal constitution yet exists, that the Czechs and Slovaks ought to come up with their own constitutions first before agreeing on a federal level, and that whatever arrangement they reached would be more a treaty than a delineation of authority within one Czechoslovak nation. Czechs concede that the old constitution needs a rehaul, but they worry that if federal responsibility is not defined first they could end up with two foreign ministries, two trade offices, and two allegedly united but de facto divided parts of the same country working at cross purposes at home as well as abroad.

Why not simply let the Slovaks go to their own ruin? Czech nationalists are beginning to say just that, and if the differences end up being irreconcilable this is undoubtedly what will happen. There will be no Yugoslav war of union. But the costs of such a decision are high, in terms of economic reform, collective influence *vis-à-vis* Europe and especially Germany (whose emergence as Czechoslovakia's largest foreign investor, while perfectly natural, is a cause for concern), and the ultimate establishment of a peaceful and prosperous European order.

After all, the enemy is not union but the kind of union forced by Communism. As the most civilized of the once captive nations, Czechoslovakia logically stands to be the model for newly freed peoples to recast their relationships in ways that lead to mutual enrichment and security. "If we can't do it here," says the Civic Institute's Michal Semim, "the signal will be sent that it can't be done anywhere." □

Fair or Foul?

WILLIAM A. RUSHER

SAN FRANCISCO

CALIFORNIA'S famous and highly popular Proposition 13, the 1978 tax-limitation initiative, is facing the biggest test in its 13-year history. The threat comes not from California voters, its legislature, or its courts, which have repeatedly ruled the measure constitutional. The danger comes from the U.S. Supreme Court, which will decide the fate of Proposition 13 by the end of its current term in June 1992.

The High Court is generally considered sensitive to states' rights, and usually defers to state taxing methods. But many viewed the Court's 1989 decision in a West Virginia case (*Allegheny Pittsburgh Coal Co.* v. *County Commission of Webster County*) as reopening the constitutional issues involved in Proposition 13.

In the *Allegheny* case, the Court invalidated the use of acquisition value as the basis for assessed values. Although the decision rested on a local assessor's lack of statutory and state constitutional authority, foes of Proposition 13 regarded the *Allegheny* case as an invitation to retry the issue.

Recently, in a move that seemed to support this view, the Court agreed to review a case brought by R. H. Macy & Co. challenging Proposition 13. When Macy withdrew the challenge in the face of adverse publicity, the Court, undaunted, agreed to hear a different California case raising the issue. The concern of California taxpayers is based on the fact that the High Court doesn't usually agree to review a case merely to affirm the determination of the lower court.

The latest challenge arises in a case entitled *Nordlinger* v. *Hahn*, filed against the Los Angeles County Assessor by one Stephanie Nordlinger. In 1988 Miss Nordlinger bought for $170,000 a small tract house in the Baldwin Hills area of Los Angeles. There is no dispute that she knew her annual property taxes would be limited to 1 per cent of the acquisition value, or $1,700, with maximum annual increases of 2 per cent—all as provided in Proposition 13. Later, however, Miss Nordlinger learned that neighbors with comparable properties were paying substantially lower property taxes than she was—also thanks to Proposition 13.

Proposition 13 was passed by the voters in 1978 by an overwhelming margin of nearly 2 to 1. It not only amended the state constitution to cap property taxes at 1 per cent of assessed value, but rolled back existing assessments to 1975 values and allowed full reassessments at market value upon sale or transfer of the property. Until that sale, reassessments were limited to a maximum of 2 per cent a year.

It is only the reassessment upon sale or transfer that Miss Nordlinger objects to, noting that as a "stranger" moving into the neighborhood her property was assessed at three to four times the value of her neighbors', since they bought their properties much earlier when their value was lower. The constitutional issue is whether this disparity is fair and reasonable under the "equal protection" clause of the Constitution, since nothing in the state constitution requires that all taxpayers be treated exactly alike.

The near-unanimous 1979 decision of the California State Supreme Court

Mr. Rusher, formerly NR*'s Publisher, is a trustee of the Pacific Legal Foundation.*

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upholding Proposition 13 had quelled all legal opposition until the U.S. Supreme Court, in the aforesaid *Allegheny* case, ruled unanimously that a county assessor's self-adopted policy of adjusting assessments only on resale violated the "equal protection" clause. Chief Justice Rehnquist, writing for the Court, described the policy as an "aberrational enforcement policy" of one county official, but cautioned that the justices "do not decide today whether the assessment method would stand . . . if it were the law of a State," citing Proposition 13 as an example. The Chief Justice even went on to point out that Proposition 13 is "grounded on the belief that taxes should be based on the original cost of property and should not tax unrealized paper gains" in its value.

Even these disclaimers, however, were not enough to discourage a barrage of new legal challenges to Proposition 13, all of which were dismissed by the California courts on the basis of the earlier State Supreme Court decision. This had held that assessment based on acquisition value was "fair and equitable" compared to a system based on current market value, which used inflated values based on "sales to third parties over which sales [the taxpayer] can exercise no control." It is on that issue that the United States Supreme Court, in the *Nordlinger* case, will hear oral arguments on February 25.

The laboring oar in defense of Proposition 13 before the Supreme Court will be—as it has been in the case of all prior challenges—in the hands of the Sacramento-based Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) as *amicus curiae* acting on its own behalf and that of two other *amici*: the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and Paul Gann's Citizens Committee. The nominal defendant, the Los Angeles County Assessor, must long for the overthrow of the historic measure, since local taxing authorities are precisely what Proposition 13 was designed to restrict. (The plaintiff too, interestingly enough, was a Los Angeles County official: a deputy public defender.)

PLF IS a nonprofit, tax-exempt legal foundation created in 1973 to defend individual rights and oppose the heavy hand of unreasonable, and unreasoning, government. With special emphasis on environmental law and property-rights law, it takes only cases which, when resolved, will set key legal precedents. Today, it is one of the oldest and largest legal foundations doing battle for essentially conservative causes.

Katherine Trunk

Many legal experts rate the *Nollan* case, a PLF victory in the United States Supreme Court, as the most important property-rights decision in fifty years. In it, the Court ruled that requiring owners to dedicate one-third of their property to the state, as a condition for a permit to build a home on the rest, was an unconstitutional "taking." More recently, PLF persuaded the Court to rule unanimously that the California Bar Association's use of mandatory dues for political purposes, over members' objections, violated the First Amendment.

The *Nordlinger* case has many aspects that make it a good example of the usefulness of a legal foundation like PLF. There is certainly nothing unfair about assessing a person's house at $100,000 if he or she did in fact pay $100,000 for it. If the next buyer pays $200,000 for the house, he expects to be taxed on an assessed valuation of $200,000. But if the first owner simply keeps the house, while houses nearby are sold, as the years pass, for $200,000, why should he be taxed as if he had bought his own house for that amount, when he may never have paid $200,000 for anything in his life?

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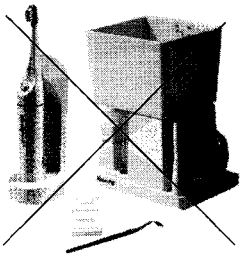

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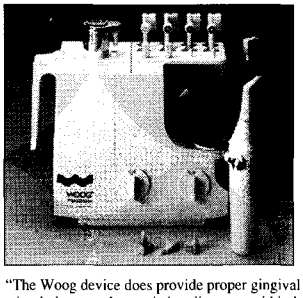

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her own tax bears a reasonable relation to the *realized* value of her property. The 1 per cent cap assures that everyone's tax will be reasonable.

Moreover, Proposition 13 also encourages existing owners to maintain and improve their properties without fear of increasing assessed values. Under the old (current-market-value) system, property owners who failed to maintain their properties were rewarded with lower assessments, and repairs were postponed until properties were put up for sale. This "inverted maintenance," was detrimental to whole neighborhoods, and in some cases caused a deterioration in neighborhood values.

Compare the fairness of Proposition 13 with that of the available alternatives, and consider its impact on the three parties most directly involved: the existing owner, a new buyer, and the taxing authority. Proposition 13 treats all three with scrupulous fairness. Property owners, including new buyers, are assured of low property taxes, tax certainty, protection from future skyrocketing property taxes, and elimination of periodic hassles over reappraisals and current market value. The taxing authorities of local governments are provided with a stable revenue source, including ever-increasing tax revenues that exceed the rate of inflation. Under Proposition 13, even a decrease in existing property values during a real-estate downturn will have little or no effect on the property-tax-revenue stream.

Without Proposition 13 there is no certainty as to tax liability and no stable revenue for local governments. What's fair about a system that lets big spenders in local government hit homeowners with inflationary assessments and higher taxes to finance expensive new programs? That would only revive the human tragedy of forcing the poor, and many on fixed incomes, especially the elderly, the retired, and the disabled, out of their homes.

According to the State Board of Equalization, $16.4 billion was collected as property taxes in California in 1990–91. It is estimated that another $11 to $13 billion would be due from property owners if Proposition 13 were invalidated and replaced with the old system, which taxed paper gains caused by inflation, speculation, and encroaching developments.

Thanks to new purchases, new developments placed on the tax rolls for the first time, and the annual 2 per cent increase allowed under Proposition 13, the assessed value of property in California has increased 9.8 annually in recent years. Despite this nearly 10 per cent increase in property-tax revenues, local governments have been unable to live within their means. Hence their eagerness to eliminate Proposition 13. In the once agriculturally rich Santa Clara Valley near San Jose, farmers (before Proposition 13) were often forced to sell their land to speculators who had bought up neighboring farms at shopping-center prices, sending local assessed values and tax rates through the roof—and taxing agriculture right out of existence. The farmers profited from the sale of their land, but simply used the profit to bid up the price of replacement farms, generating an endless cycle of higher assessments and increased taxes on all California farmers.

The continuing popularity of Proposition 13 is attested to by the inability of its opponents even to muster enough signatures to put competing tax measures on the ballot. On the other hand, organizations founded by anti-tax crusaders Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, the authors of Proposition 13, have successfully placed on the ballot measures clarifying it and overturning certain negative court rulings on its interpretation.

One cannot help questioning Miss Nordlinger's motive for bringing this suit. Invalidating Proposition 13 will not save her a penny in taxes, or benefit other new buyers in any way. It will simply increase the taxes of all her neighbors, by requiring that their properties, whenever they were bought, be assessed at full current market value. At the same time, Miss Nordlinger will be denying herself protection from high future taxes based on inflated property values. The only winners will be the tax-and-spend local governments of California—such as Miss Nordlinger's former employer, the County of Los Angeles. □

South African Prize Day

BRIAN CROZIER

PARIS

ONE WOULD NOT normally come to Paris to meet the President of South Africa, but this was a time of prizes for distinguished South Africans. Henry Kissinger had presented President F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress jointly with the Houphouët–Boigny prize for "peace" (donated by the longtime President of the Ivory Coast), under the auspices of that formerly subversive organization, UNESCO. France's troubled President Mitterrand had received the pair of them for lunch at the Elysée Palace: a sign of the times made possible by de Klerk's dismantling of apartheid. (And a welcome diversion for Mitterrand from the domestic political crisis caused by the admission to a Paris hospital of the notorious terrorist, George Habash.)

President de Klerk's other prize, for "political courage," was presented to him by the splendid French quarterly *Politique Internationale*. The previous recipients were the late Anwar El-Sadat of Egypt and America's own Jeane Kirkpatrick.

After his speech in the tightly packed Pavillon Gabriel, behind the Elysée, I had a talk with the President. My main interest was in the current relations between Joe Slovo, leader of the South African Communist Party, and Mandela. In August 1990, Gennady Yanayev, the hard-line "leader" of the failed coup that paved the way for Gorbachev's fall, told Slovo in Moscow that he could rely on Moscow's solidarity with South Africa's Communists and the ANC. Now, de Klerk told me, Mandela was saying that Slovo (incidentally smitten with incurable cancer) was a "moderating" influence on him. How things change—and not only on the Left.

Only last September, de Klerk had presented his National Party's proposals to a federal party Congress in Bloemfontein, claiming that they demonstrated the National Party's opposi-

Mr. Crozier, an NR *Contributing Editor, is the author of* The Gorbachev Phenomenon.

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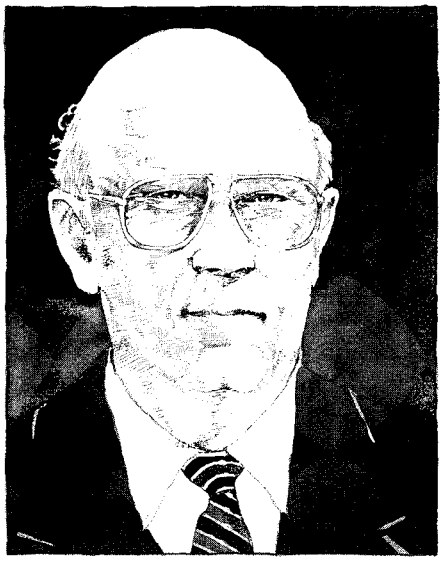
tion to "domination of any kind." Under these proposals, the country would be divided into nine semi-autonomous regions, replacing the existing four provinces and ten non-independent Bantustans. Alongside strong regional governments would be a central government based on a lower house of parliament elected by a system of proportional representation on the basis of universal non-racial adult franchise. In addition all parties gaining at least 10 per cent of electoral support in each of the nine regions would send an equal number of representatives to an upper house. And the cabinet would be appointed by consensus between the three biggest parties, which would have parity of representation regardless of their proportion of the votes cast.

The ANC's reaction was to assert that the proposals enshrined "minority privileges by ensuring that any majority party is powerless." Nor was the ANC the only organization to protest. The Right and the white Conservative Party described the proposals as "a recipe for revolution." And the ANC's rival, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), described de Klerk's plans as a "transferring of the struggle from race to class." Among the major independent players, only Chief Buthelezi, leader of the (mainly Zulu) Inkatha Freedom Party, welcomed the principle of universal suffrage included in the proposals. And violence went on just as though de Klerk hadn't tabled *any* proposals. In the week before the September signing of a peace accord between the government, the ANC, and Inkatha, 121 people were killed, mainly in clashes between the two black organizations.

Events since then have hardly indicated a smooth run to a new democratic era. In late October, the ANC and the PAC launched a new "Patriotic Front," which Inkatha promptly denounced as "regressive and foreign." Another black organization, the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), refused to join the Front. And there was a two-day national strike in early November, in protest against a new value-added tax, followed by the killing of 84 miners in mysterious circumstances.

Despite these inauspicious preludes, formal constitutional talks opened on December 22 in the Conference on a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), when de Klerk envisioned an interim all-party government to rule for five years. Too long, said Mandela: how about 18 months? He went on to say whites could be guaranteed a block of seats in South Africa's parliament, but only for a limited period. The concept of majority rule was not negotiable, although the ANC has since hinted a willingness to accept de Klerk's idea of strong regional government to allay white fears. But it is still threatening strikes if no interim government has been formed within six months.

At the same time, white opinion grows increasingly nervous. The government has seen its support drop from about two-thirds to one-half of the white electorate and is expected to lose the February 19 by-election at



Fred Carlson

Potchefstroom to the surging Conservatives. And para-military forces to the right of the Conservatives are flexing their muscles. The Defense Force recently arrested 20 white extremists in two sweeps. One of those netted on a charge of political violence was the head of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement, Eugene Terre-Blanche, who in another context might be described as colorful.

Still, de Klerk has been forced by this growing discontent to promise a white "veto" on constitutional changes in the form of a separate white referendum. And no one quite knows what will happen if that produces a "no" vote. It will be back to the drawing board.

If de Klerk faces increasingly uncertain prospects at home, he is making progress abroad. In Paris he persuaded the French heads of industry to step up their investments in his country. Indeed, it was an indicator of South Africa's growing respectability that Mandela, before turning up in Paris, looked in on Copenhagen to congratulate the Danes on being the only European Community member to press on with sanctions against South Africa.

DE KLERK'S Paris success is part of a sensible strategy to acquire not only recognition in the international community but also investment and political support. So far, the results have been mixed. Last September both the Australian and the Canadian Prime Ministers (Bob Hawke, at the time, and Brian Mulroney, respectively) canceled visits to South Africa. In each case, the reason given was concern over the slow pace of reform. But Japan lifted trade sanctions in October and a five-year steel contract was signed.

And the same month, the long-serving South African Foreign Minister, Roelof "Pik" Botha (who was in Paris with de Klerk) made a successful tour to Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Communist China. He went on to visit the now-independent Baltic States and made history when he went to the Soviet Union (as it still was) and opened a trade mission in St. Petersburg. Consular relations had been broken off as long ago as 1956 and the Soviet Union had played a major coordinating role in aiding the ANC during its long clandestine struggle for power.

Even more substantial diplomatic gains were de Klerk's visits to the White House in September 1990 and, on the eve of his Paris trip, to London, where he met Prime Minister John Major and Margaret Thatcher.

If anyone can break the South African deadlock, he can. And if he fails, a new rule of terror will start in this country, whose GNP equals that of the whole of black Africa.

De Klerk deserves international support—and he needs it to sustain reform in South Africa. He must persuade the whites that the collapse of talks would revive sanctions, and the ANC that the international community would not reward black intransigence with renewed aid and diplomatic support. But de Klerk himself won't retain international backing unless he moves faster than the Afrikaner diehards would like. □

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Splendid Interventionism

IS AMERICA A PART OF EUROPE?

Gorbachev argued for a Common European Home —with America a distant neighbor. On the contrary, our senior statesman argues, the Western Alliance ought to take in boarders.

RICHARD NIXON

WITH THE COLLAPSE of the Soviet Union, the traditional rationale for the U.S. role in Europe has been dealt a fatal blow. In 1971, the Mansfield amendment—which would have halved the U.S. military presence in Europe—was defeated by only one vote in the Senate. It is only a matter of time before a modern-day Mansfield amendment calling for a total withdrawal is introduced in Congress. Some on the American Left argue that our new emphasis should be on domestic issues and that victory in the cold war allows us to shake off old commitments. Others on the American Right argue that a Europe recovered from World War II should pay the bills for its own defense. Many Europeans, tired of NATO low-altitude training flights and exhausted by forty years of brinkmanship, simply want the Americans to pack up and go home.

All of these arguments are flawed. First, two world wars have proved that the United States ignores events in Europe at its own peril. Had we been engaged in Europe, rather than sulking in isolation after World War I, we could have tipped the balance of power against the aggressors, possibly deterring rather than fighting World War II. Despite the waning of the cold war, the United States has major political and economic interests in Europe. The U.S. role in NATO gives us significant indirect leverage in addressing such issues as the Persian Gulf crisis and trade disputes. Without a military presence, we would have no voice in Europe.

In a historical perspective, Europe has been an even less stable place than the Middle East. With the end of the cold war, Europe will not descend into fratricidal war, but the possibility for conflict and armed clashes will persist and even increase. Yugoslavia's civil war is a case in point. It is astonishing that the return of open warfare in Europe has not set off alarm bells in every European capital. The scores of ethnic groups and the myriad competing territorial claims throughout the continent create endless possibilities for conflict.

Some observers argue that a post-1992 superstate can unify the cacophony of European views and speak with one voice. But that vision has become a pipe dream. In the Persian Gulf crisis, our European allies scattered like a flock of quail. A few, particularly Britain and France, fought side by side with our troops in the Kuwaiti deserts. But most, especially Germany, stuck their heads in the sand. In Yugoslavia's internal crisis, mediators from the European Community responded like Keystone Kops. During the initial phases of the crisis, Europe split over whether to support the Communist Serbian and central government or the democratic secessionist republics of Slovenia and Croatia. The community sent teams to act as ceasefire observers but did not marshal its massive political and economic leverage to demand a nonviolent resolution based on democratic self-determination. In its first major post-cold-war play, Europe fumbled the ball.

No single locus of decision-making exists among our European allies. Aristotle was profoundly perceptive when he wrote that government by the many or government by the few cannot act as efficiently as government by one. In foreign policy, a single point of executive authority is indispensable for decisive action. The premise of those who foresaw the emergence of a European superstate was that Germany would become its natural leader. But the Germans, hamstrung by pacifist tendencies during the Gulf crisis and preoccupied with the costs of unification, forfeited the role. In the meantime, the rest of Europe no longer views German leadership

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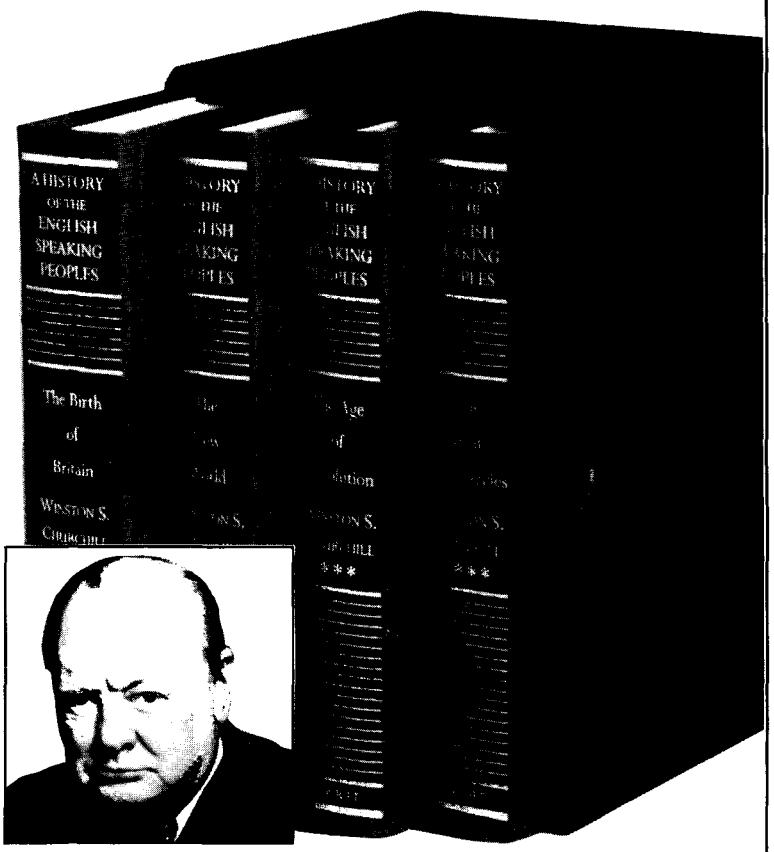

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as the answer. Britain and France—who performed decisively in the Gulf—do not wish to defer to Berlin. And the rise of a unified Germany has prompted fears that German leadership will mean German domination.

Keeping a U.S. Presence

THE QUESTION is not whether but how the United States should maintain its presence in Europe. A common transatlantic home should be built on five pillars:

1. *NATO guarantees for Eastern Europe.* Soon after their liberation, Eastern European democrats began casting about for new security arrangements. Collective security through the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is a nonstarter. It has 35 diverse members even before the newly independent republics of the Soviet Union are added to its ranks. Its rules requiring unanimity for action create insurmountable hurdles for collective defense. It would recreate the days of the League of Nations, when aggressors could

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veto collective actions designed to stop them. Moreover, the CSCE is just that: a conference, a diplomatic process. It cannot provide tangible security arrangements, such as the integrated military structure of NATO. Unless institutionalized and bolstered with well-trained and well-equipped forces, the CSCE can never contribute more than added confidence-building measures and a forum for discussion. In a major crisis, it will never be capable of doing more than adopting nonenforceable, wrist-slapping resolutions.

With the profound political instability and dire economic situation in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the region could still become a geopolitical demolition derby. While current Russian leaders have combined their nationalism with democracy, we cannot exclude the possibility that others might later emerge who might vent its darker side. If concern still exists about Germany, which has had a democratic government for forty years, there will be even more reason for concern about Russia, which has had a democratic government for less than one year.

As Europe's only time-tested security structure, NATO should seek to find ways to fill the security vacuum in Eastern Europe, particularly over the next decade when the uncertainty centering on instability within the former Soviet Union will run the highest. This does not mean that NATO members should immediately extend its full Article 5 commitment—"an armed attack on one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack on all of them"—to the new democracies. But it does mean that we should think in more subtle terms than an all-or-nothing guarantee.

The United States and its Western European allies should unambiguously declare that NATO has a critical interest in the survival and security of these new democracies. By linking our commitment to democratic rule in Eastern European countries, it will give added incentive to these nations to avoid a reversion to authoritarianism.

In the longer term, NATO should develop formal security links with Eastern European democracies. Our goal should be their full integration into NATO. We will never build a common transatlantic home if NATO forces Eastern Europeans to live outside its protective walls.

2. *U.S. activism in Eastern Europe.* The countries of Eastern Europe, struggling against enormous economic odds, have a great interest in fostering U.S. ties, especially to help them emerge from the shadow of Western European economic domination. Also, as the European Community grants associate-member status to the Eastern Europeans, a close economic relationship could give the U.S. a potential back door into an increasingly protectionist post-1992 Europe.

Above all, we should open Western markets to Eastern European exports. Trade represents the major hope for rapid economic development. With Moscow demanding hard-currency payment for its exports, Eastern European energy costs soared by $20 billion in 1991. Foreign debts limit their credit. Because of the current uncompetitive quality of Eastern European goods, the 30 per cent of Polish, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian exports that went to the Soviet Union or East Germany—markets now closed or vanished—has few buyers. It is imperative that the European Community grant them associate status as soon as possible and that the United States immediately liberalize trade by increasing the list of imports given duty-free entry. Since sustained economic growth depends not on aid but on trade, the West must lift these counterproductive obstacles.

In order to prevent potential ethnic conflicts, we should work with the continent's leaders to channel the new Eastern European nationalism in constructive directions. Those who look with dismay at nationalism's re-emergence should remember that only their sense of distinct identity enabled these peoples to resist and triumph over 45 years of Soviet indoctrination and

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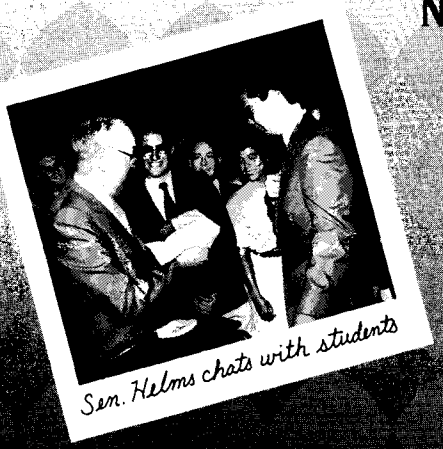

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repression. Yet national borders do not neatly divide separate nations. Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania all have significant national minorities, while Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia actually are not nation-states but multinational states.

Tragically, on the eve of the current armed hostilities, officials from the United States and the European Community made ill-advised statements in support of Yugoslavia's central government, thereby appearing to give a green light to the use of force by the Communists. It makes no sense to try to maintain the artificial unity of Yugoslavia. The United States and Western Europe should have backed up their demands for an end to Serbian aggression against Croatia with a resolution in the UN Security Council calling for the immediate dispatch of peacekeeping forces to Yugoslavia.

National Rights

IN THE LONGER TERM, we should encourage Europe's leaders—from West and East—to develop a formal charter of national minority rights. The international community has articulated individual human rights in the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and other documents. But apart from the Genocide Convention of 1948, it has not stipulated the legitimate rights of national minorities. While the issue arises also outside of Europe—the Kurds and the Tibetans, for example—Europe's democratic consensus might enable its leaders to address the question forthrightly. A new European charter could set guidelines for guaranteeing legitimate national rights in such areas as language use in education and respect for religious freedom, thereby helping to reduce the danger of civil strife or even war resulting from Eastern Europe's and the former Soviet Union's national mosaic.

All the steps are needed to integrate the new Eastern European democracies into the common transatlantic home. None is a question of charity. Our interests, as well as theirs, will be advanced by making Eastern Europe the focal point of the U.S. political and economic presence in the region.

3. *Close U.S.–German partnership.* Not only in Europe but also around the world, enduring memories of World War II still limit Germany's ability to play a role commensurate with its economic power and geopolitical importance. In the Persian Gulf crisis, both internal and external anxieties about greater German activism produced a confused and ineffective policy, with Bonn's ultimate military contribution amounting to a paltry 720 troops deployed in the inactive Turkish theater. To allay suspicions about a wider global role for Germany, its leaders must work with the other Western powers, particularly the United States. In view of our mutual interests, we should develop a common agenda, with the United States providing the needed "political cover" for a more active German foreign policy.

At the same time, the United States needs a European partner dedicated to expanding opportunities for world trade. Since Germany's exports account for 35 per cent of its GNP—one of the highest totals in the West—Berlin has a profound interest in keeping markets open. We should therefore work in tandem to avoid a post-1992 Fortress Europe, because higher tariffs will lead to a cycle of retaliation. In addition, we must resolve the outstanding disputes in the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) talks. While the Western Europeans bicker about retaining $81.6 billion in trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, we risk losing an estimated $5 trillion of additional global economic growth over the next decade that a Uruguay Round agreement would bring. A U.S.–German partnership could not only overcome the pleadings of Europe's and America's special interests, but it could quiet catcalls from pundits on both sides of the Atlantic who support the "go it alone" approach.

Indeed, in coordinating fiscal and monetary policies among the major industrial democracies, the United States should at times follow Germany's lead. U.S. Presidents have repeatedly tried to "jawbone" the Germans to lower interest rates to stimulate the world economy. But we need to concede the wisdom of Germany's approach. Our looser monetary policies have produced an inflation rate of 6 per cent, while Germany's stands at 3 per cent. As a result, U.S. interest rates on long-term loans—which are critical for capital development—run significantly higher than those in Germany. We should therefore think twice before pressing the Germans to ease up on the money supply after every momentary blip in the index of leading economic indicators. While their approach might limit growth in the short term, it recognizes the need to eliminate inflationary expectations for the sake of long-term growth.

Curbing Arms Sales

ANOTHER ISSUE on our mutual agenda should be controlling the transfer of key technologies to the developing world. The activities of German firms in Libya and Iraq have given Berlin a black eye. Germany does not need a reputation for moral indifference or irresponsibility as it tries to re-emerge on the world stage. Unless Germany reins in its freewheeling arms exporters and unless the West clamps down on technology exports to rogue states such as Iraq and Syria, we will someday confront a new Saddam Hussein armed not with Scuds but ICBMs. To create the impression that Germany is a geopolitical chameleon would not only undermine U.S.–German relations but also would reinforce historical anxieties about a wider German role.

This partnership will take time to develop and will only work if Germany remains a responsible Western power rather than a country jockeying for position between East and West. At the same time, a special relationship with Germany does not imply the United States putting greater distance between itself and Britain, France, Italy, and other NATO nations.

4. *An open-door policy vis-à-vis the newly independent republics of the Soviet Union.* Before the coup, most of

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the U.S. foreign-policy establishment, in the name of stability, decried nationalist movements that opposed Gorbachev. They were wrong. Stability at the cost of individual freedom and national independence is too high a price to pay. We should not condemn nationalism but only the excesses of extreme nationalists. We must find ways to integrate into the West those former Soviet republics that establish democratic institutions, adopt free-market reforms, and respect the rights of national minorities within their borders.

5. *Restructuring NATO for new missions.* Many observers believe that NATO should become a political rather than a military alliance. But no alliance has ever survived for long after security ceased to be its core function. No political substitute exists for the bonds of collective defense. Moreover, in the hardheaded world of power politics, no diplomatic or political initiative can succeed unless backed by credible military capabilities. This does not mean that NATO cannot add new political missions. But it does mean that we must not confuse NATO's raison d'être—forging a transatlantic security link—with other important but secondary goals.

What to Do?

IN THE FOG of public debate, two options have begun to emerge. The first—the NATO option—centers around a continuing U.S. commitment to a major force presence in Europe. While the numbers of U.S. troops in Europe would substantially decrease, the centrality of our role in the alliance and its integrated military command would remain unchanged. The second—the European Community option—seeks to develop a principally European security structure, though with continued U.S. participation. Ultimately, our allies will coalesce around the latter. While they understand the need for our nuclear guarantee—and accept the voice that it gives America in Europe's security decisions—they will object to a U.S. policy that supports European political unity but demands a security relationship in which Washington retains its dominant leadership role.

Our approach should welcome increased Western European self-reliance. When we brought our forces to a peak deployment of over 400,000 troops in the mid 1950s, I vividly recall a meeting of the National Security Council when President Eisenhower said that he intended this to be only a temporary measure needed until our allies in Europe recovered from World War II. If the Europeans develop the capability of speaking with one voice on political and security matters—which is possible but not inevitable—we should embrace the European Community option.

This does not mean that we should withdraw all of our ground forces from Europe. But it does mean that our function should involve a conventional and nuclear deployment much smaller than today but still large enough to create the essential link of mutual security and to preserve the military infrastructure for any U.S. intervention that might become necessary in a crisis.

As NATO finds its footing in the new Europe, it should also expand its mission. Today, as demonstrated in the Persian Gulf, challenges to Western interests can arise half a world away. If NATO adheres to artificial geographical restrictions, we will be shooting ourselves in the foot, compromising our interests to legalism. For example, an effort to cut the oil lifeline of Western Europe is as great a threat to the security of NATO as a military attack against a NATO member. While European defense must remain NATO's core mission, so-called out-of-area security cooperation must become its cutting edge. Unless we adopt such a policy, the American people—whose commitment to NATO has depended on the perception of a Soviet threat—will inevitably seek to disengage from Europe as the alliance increasingly speaks of Moscow not as an adversary but as a "partner in security."

While we already cooperate in distant crises, our solutions tend to be ad hoc. To improve NATO's capabilities to cope with out-of-area conflicts, we need to move forward in three areas. First, the European members of NATO should develop a joint rapid deployment force that would function, depending on circumstances, independently or under an integrated command with similar U.S. forces. Second, the United States should welcome European activism in parts of the underdeveloped world where their historical experience exceeds our own. For too long, Americans have assumed that our superior military power gave us superior political wisdom. In addition, because the next crisis will likely take place in the underdeveloped world, the United States should open its overseas bases outside Europe to our NATO allies. Our current policy restricts foreign military powers from using our bases, but we should be more flexible in order to facilitate greater European activism in critical parts of the underdeveloped world. Third, NATO should develop better mechanisms for more coordinated crisis management. Working together, the members of the Atlantic alliance—which control over half of the world economy—wield power that no potential adversary can afford to ignore.

These five pillars provide a framework for a common transatlantic home. The critical issue for Europe is whether economic unity will produce a parochial or an open Europe. Critics wrongly scorned former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's position on European unification. Her warnings about a unified but inward-looking and protectionist Europe were misinterpreted as opposition to any unity at all. She understood that the rush to create the mechanisms of unity had clouded the need to craft the meaning of unity. In her vision, European economic unification should serve as the necessary precursor to Atlantic economic unification. On the eve of post-1992 Europe, its leaders must understand that unity will serve European interests only if it represents the first step toward moving out into the world and not toward retreating behind the cloistered walls of a Fortress Europe. □

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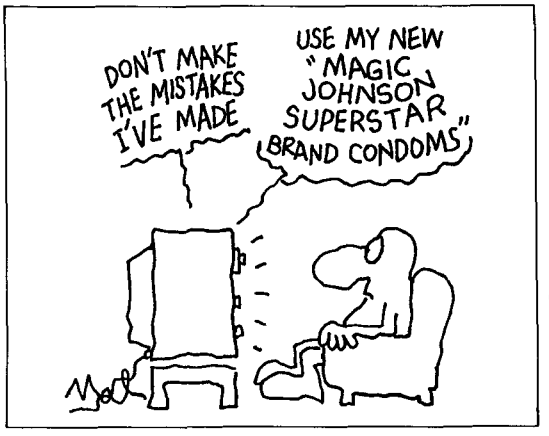

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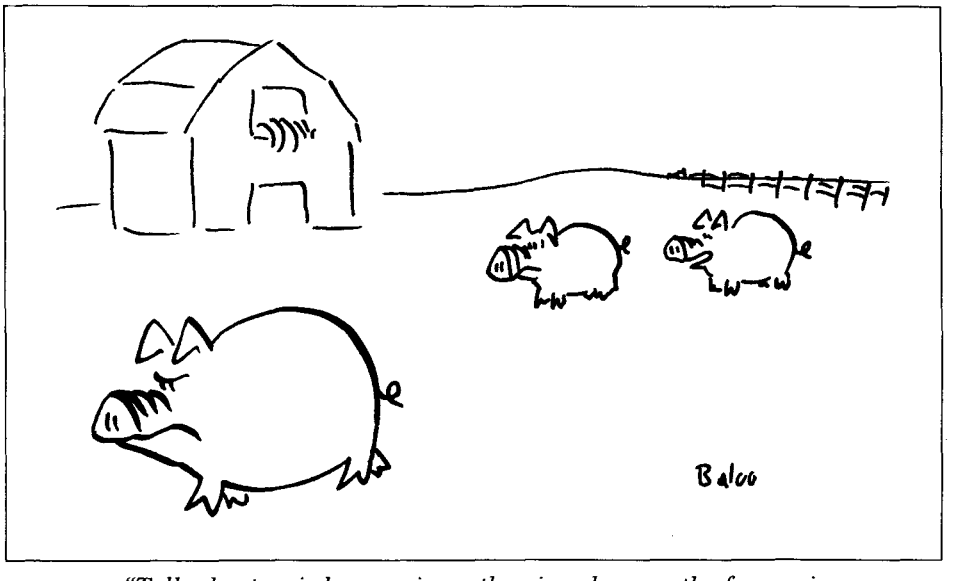
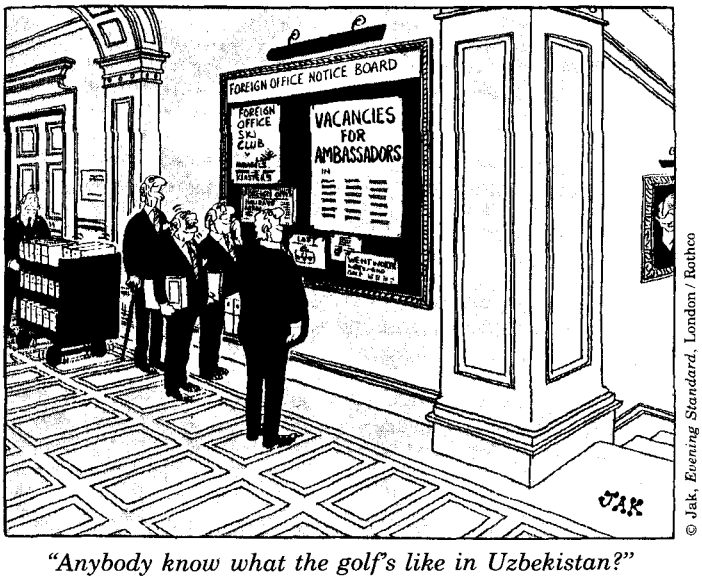


"Talk about weirdo conspiracy theories—he says the farmer is planning to kill us and eat *us!"*

The President's Dark Side

If New Hampshire's a squeaker or worse,
Mr. Bush will slam into reverse,
    Then roar forward in drive,
    Eating (Who knows?) alive
With a suitable country-club curse.

W. H. VON DREELE



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"Anybody know what the golf's like in Uzbekistan?"

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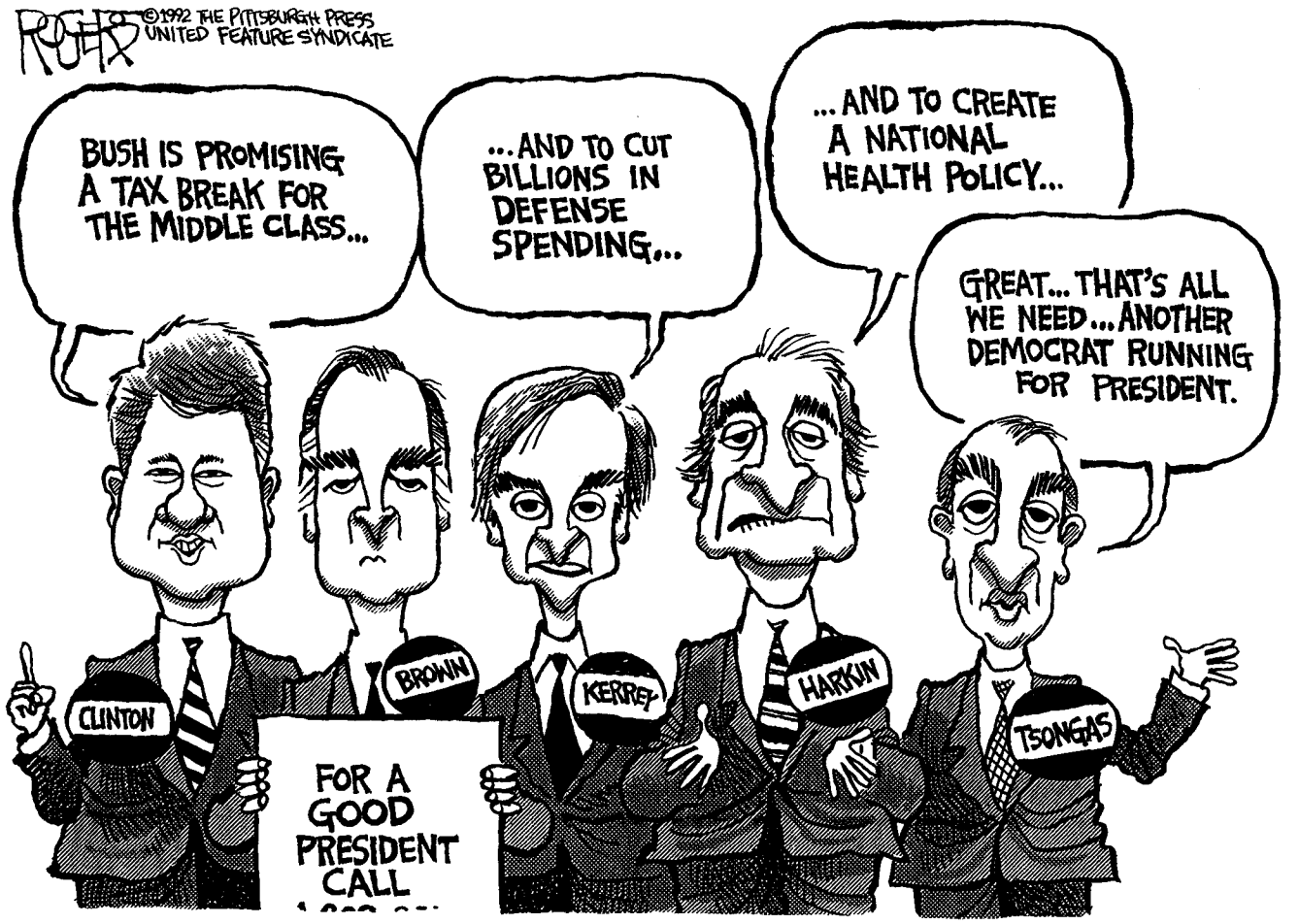
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BUSH IS PROMISING A TAX BREAK FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS...
...AND TO CUT BILLIONS IN DEFENSE SPENDING...
...AND TO CREATE A NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY...
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BROWN
KERREY
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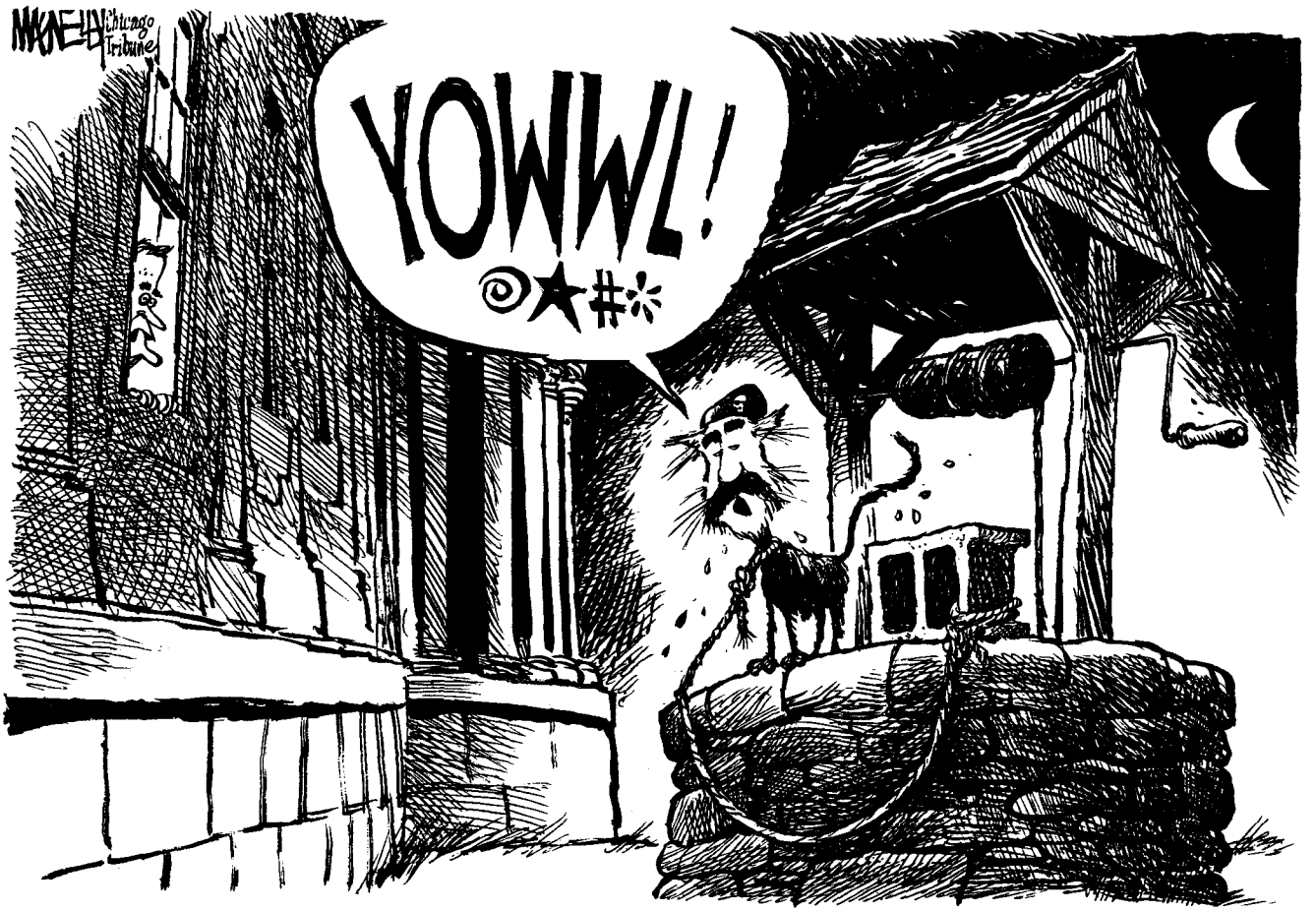
TSONGAS
FOR A GOOD PRESIDENT CALL



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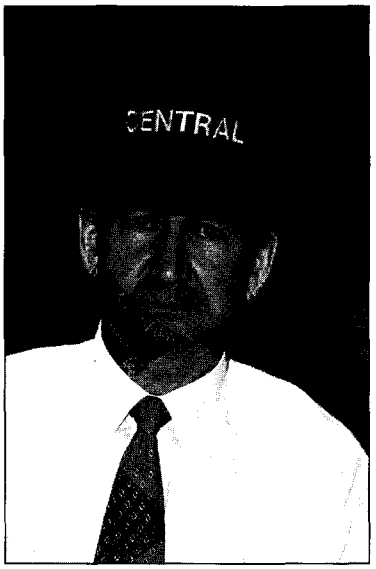

Election '92

THE CASE FOR BUCHANAN

Is Buchanan Reagan's heir? Yes—almost. Anyway, he sure beats Bush.

TOM BETHELL

WHEN the columnist and TV commentator Patrick J. Buchanan declared himself a presidential candidate in December, he was quietly concerned about one thing: Would he be taken seriously as a candidate? Columnists don't normally run for President after all, and there was a real possibility that his colleagues in the press corps, few of whom share his views, would poohpooh his candidacy, ignore his press conferences, discard his press releases, fail to invite him to the TV studios, and so on. In the event, this did not happen. Given its well-known political bias, the press corps on the whole gave Buchanan fair treatment in the opening weeks of his campaign. In fact, *Washington Post* columnist Jim Hoagland, and *Newsweek*'s ideologue-in-residence, Jonathan Alter, complained that Buchanan had had too much coverage and that newsmen should give him the cold shoulder that Buchanan had feared.

That was the good news. The bad news was that Buchanan enjoyed only weak support from some conservatives, a noncommital silence from others, opposition from prominent neoconservatives, and a cool, critical neutrality from NATIONAL REVIEW. And this, surely, was a mistake. In his primary campaign against President Bush, Buchanan deserves conservative support.

"In politics, the first test of power is whether you can punish those who betray you," Joe Sobran has written. "Bush is playing conservatives for suckers. And so far he's getting away with it." The case *for* Buchanan depends on the case *against* Bush. There would be no grounds for supporting a columnist for President if we already had a tolerably conservative incumbent in the White House. (Ronald Reagan didn't attract conservative opposition.) But we don't.

By far the most important issue facing the country today is the relentless, steady growth of government control over our lives and incomes. In 1953, government at all levels consumed about 24 per cent of GNP. Today that figure has risen to a minimum of 35 per cent, and some say it is a good deal higher than that. The nation's economy is saddled with a huge and growing class of parasites. In order to tackle the problem that they represent, the growth in taxation must be stopped: No new taxes.

Any President who does not understand this problem does not qualify as a conservative. And any conservative who thinks that presidential betrayal on domestic issues can be excused on the grounds that he bombed Baghdad and captured Manuel Noriega, bringing him here to stand trial for drug-smuggling, needs to have his priorities examined. Bush has only the haziest idea of what is going wrong in this country, vaguely imagining that everything will be okay if he seeks unity on the Democrats' terms: agreeing with their principles but quibbling over their timetables and dollar amounts: "losing slowly," as Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus once put it.

Keeping Reagan Alive

BUSH IS NOT merely reversing the Reagan agenda. He is threatening to discredit it. Liberal pundits are only too happy to blame the recession and the general malaise on "bills finally coming due from the 1980s," the "decade of greed," and so on. Bush himself may well imagine that he has retained the thrust of Reagan's policies. But he seems to have forgotten completely his weekly lunches with Reagan, over an eight-year span. At the same time he has tenaciously retained the Keynesian ideas that were taught at Yale in the 1940s—as his recent rhetoric about "stimulating" the economy has shown. He imagines that more government spending (already in deficit to the tune of $400 billion a year) can jump-start an economy that is suffering from an excessive burden of regulations, taxation, and freeloaders.

Under George Bush, supply-side ideas about changing the relative prices of leisure and labor completely disappeared from the executive branch. Instead, we are led to suppose that the economy can be goosed into action by additional shopping and by accounting changes in the tax code that increase the take-home pay of taxpayers in an election year. As Buchanan told the nation's mayors in

Mr. Bethell is Washington correspondent for The American Spectator.

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Washington: "Any Republican who thinks a recovery program consists of going out to J. C. Penney's and buying four pairs of socks should never use a phrase like voodoo economics."

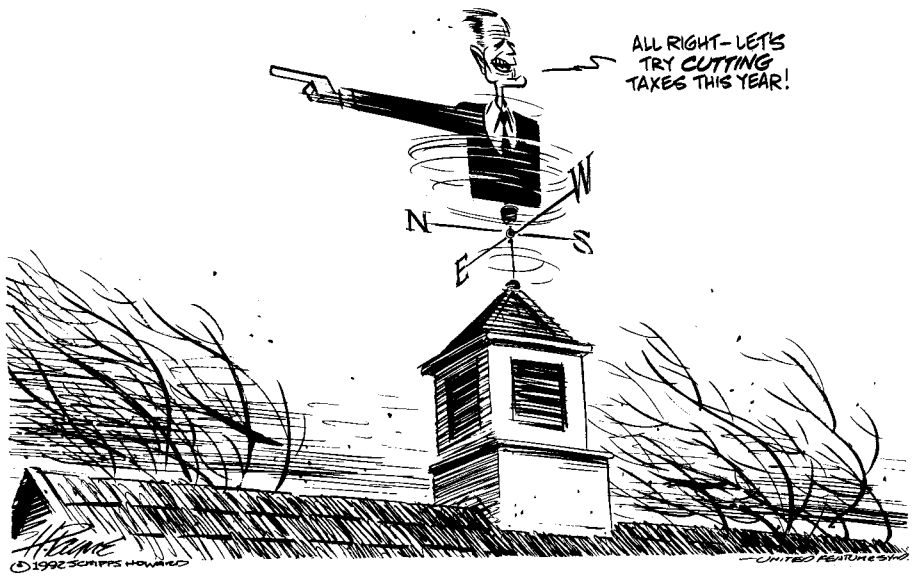
Answering Critics

BUT, you say, there are strikes against Buchanan. Good reasons why conservatives have been lukewarm? Let us look at them one by one.

Buchanan has not held public office. This lame pretext has been proffered by some conservatives who presumably differ with Buchanan on other grounds. If conservatives had to rely on the existing pool of office-holders, we'd have the same old crowd forever. The Founding Fathers' idea was that a good citizen with sound principles was sufficiently qualified to hold public office. It's high time that the government was brought back under popular control, and only an outsider can begin to do this. Conservatives holding out for a résumé candidate might consider starting a "Bob Michel for President" movement. Buchanan showed in his December 17 press conference at the National Press Club that he can field questions on a wide range of issues (e.g., the status of Quebec) with specificity (the Canadian free-trade agreement "would be instantly extended to a [sovereign] Quebec") and without resorting to the orotund tautologies that professional pols love. It is a safe bet that Buchanan today is better informed on international issues than *any* of the Democratic candidates.

Buchanan is an isolationist. Buchanan's alleged isolationism is almost always discussed with reference to historical antecedents and pedigrees that are completely irrelevant today. We are reminded once more of Pearl Harbor, of Willkie and Dewey, and of Robert Taft's 1952 defeat by Dwight Eisenhower. What we see here is undisguised cold-war nostalgia. Buchanan is accused of living in the past by conservatives who are living in the past. We also see compromise with some conservatives all too willing to settle for big government as long as the liberals allow them to use part of it to sustain an American Empire. Buchanan prefers strategic defense to the global invasion force that has masqueraded as "defense" in recent decades, and to that extent he is "isolationist." He also questions why we have to continue stationing troops in Germany, Japan, and South Korea.

In some respects, Buchanan has shown a greater foreign-policy activism than Bush. He has called for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, to which end he would "send the Sixth Fleet on a courtesy call to Dubrovnik." To the dismay of some of his friends in the John Randolph Club, he recently told a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter that he would "support the President in any decision to use covert action to get rid of Saddam Hussein." But Buchanan would oppose subordinating U.S. foreign policy to the UN Security Council, as happened in the war against Iraq, and he is bitterly opposed to the Remocrat–Depublican policy of bailing out foreign governments through the World Bank and IMF—and sticking U.S. taxpayers with the bill. He calls not for an end to foreign policy, but for a foreign policy with a "moral compass." Today, he adds, the "guiding spirit of U.S. policy, toward both China and Yugoslavia, appears to be the entrenched amorality of Kissinger Associates."



Buchanan is anti-Semitic. This topic was explored at length in a recent essay in *NR* by Wm. F. Buckley Jr., and I understand that the controversy is to be continued with replies in a forthcoming special supplement. I will only add that, if anti-Semitism means hostility to Jews, either collectively or individually, then Buchanan is not anti-Semitic. He *is* critical of Israel.

Buchanan is a protectionist. It is much harder to defend Pat against this charge. We don't now have free trade, but at least we pay lip service to it. Buchanan doesn't. He quotes Lincoln as saying that free trade "could be the ruin of this country," adding: "And I've seen Mr. Lincoln's prophecy come true." When Japanese officials point to the laziness and illiteracy of American workers, many conservatives today not only agree, but feel those foreigners either don't know the half of it or are too polite by half. But Buchanan's speeches verge on the xenophobic, with rhetoric about "dynamic Asian capitalists eating our lunch," promises that he would "play hardball" with "dumping" (cheap goods for Americans courtesy of foreign governments), and frequent calls for the congressional investigation of "registered agents of foreign countries."

In his calling for leadership by a President who will "make America number one again," Buchanan invokes a standard that is not nearly "isolationist" enough. It is comparative, pitting us against foreigners; rather than absolute, seeking liberty and the rule of law. This complicates Buchanan's pristine message, as Joe Sobran has also noted, threatening to bring us more government, not less, and "making him an ad-hoc interventionist to that extent."

Buchanan is vulnerable on the economic front because the subject never has interested him much. "Voodoo economics is redundant," he wrote in his autobiography. He also had fun at the expense of Jack Kemp's "'Big Rock-Candy Mountain' school of conservatism, where happiness is attained through endless tax cuts and uninter-

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rupted economic growth . . . Cal Coolidge notwithstanding, the business of America is not business." This is sound thinking for a columnist (Pat told me once that he didn't get much reader-reaction to his columns about the economy), but it's perilous in a presidential candidate, from whom the electorate seeks relief from the heavy burdens imposed by Washington.

He may also be misreading the political appeal of protectionism, particularly as a result of visits to factory gates and unemployment lines. Bob Dole and Richard Gephardt made this mistake in 1988. Buchanan surprised me recently by saying that taxes are not the first concern of New Hampshire voters—government spending is. This is what he hears from unemployed voters who pay no taxes; again, a possibly dangerous misreading. The central supply-side insight that tax rates, not spending, are the key to economic reform (and are more within the power of the President to change) remains true today. Most voters may know this, even if they don't show up at town-hall meetings to convey the message to presidential candidates.

Nine Ways to Predict Presidential Elections

AS WE ENTER another presidential election year, political pundits will retail a variety of different ways to predict the winner. Here are nine of these predictors and their track records.

1. *Incumbent Presidents who run again, win.* This was true of 12 of the 16 races in this century when an incumbent President was re-nominated. The four exceptions: Taft in 1908, Hoover in 1932, Ford in 1976, and Carter in 1980. In addition, two other incumbents probably would have lost if they had run: Truman in 1952 and Johnson in 1968.

2. *Incumbent Presidents with positive performance ratings in the polls win. Those with negative ratings lose.* True, but something of a "no-brainer." The only incumbent Presidents to run and lose since polls began were Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. Both were rated, in eve-of-election polls, very negatively. However, Harry Truman had a negative rating in the poll conducted by Gallup five months before the 1948 election; we don't know how he would have rated in November. Eisenhower in 1952, Johnson in 1964, Nixon in 1972, and Reagan in 1984 all had positive poll ratings.

3. *The candidate who is ahead in the first polls after Labor Day wins.* True, except—rarely—when the lead changes. The two exceptions are Truman in 1948 and Kennedy in 1960.

4. *The final pre-election polls get the winner right.* True—except when it's very close, when at least some of the final polls may get it wrong. The major national polls have got the winner right in all the presidential elections since they started (beginning with Gallup in 1932) except in 1948, 1968, and 1976.

In 1948, the most infamous polling debacle, the few polls that were conducted all showed Dewey ahead of Truman, mainly because they stopped polling weeks or months before Truman's late surge.

In 1968 and 1976 the polls disagreed but most pollsters said it was too close to call. In the other very close election, 1960, the only major poll, Gallup, correctly showed Kennedy ahead by a whisker, but questions remain about whether he really won (or whether Mayor Daley's and Lyndon Johnson's help in "creative vote counting" put him over the top).

5. *The party of the incumbent President, whether he runs or not, loses if the country is in a recession in the fall of an election year.* True, according to Alan Lichtman of American University. In his book *Thirteen Keys to the Presidency* he writes that all seven times since the Civil War when the economy was in a recession in the fall of an election year, someone from the opposition party was elected President. The winners were Hayes (1876), Cleveland (1884), McKinley (1896), Harding (1920), Roosevelt (1932), Kennedy (1960), and Reagan (1980).

Two nit-picks are that the recession in 1980 probably ended in July, and that McKinley was re-elected in 1900 even though some believe there was a recession then.

6. *If real disposable income increases by 3.8 per cent in the year before an election, the incumbent party wins; if not, it loses.* True, according to Robert Westcott of Wharton Econometric Forecasting, of all elections since World War II. The incumbent party's candidate was defeated following the failure to reach the 3.8 per cent mark in 1952, 1960, 1968, 1976, and 1980. The incumbent party won in 1948, 1956, 1964, 1972, 1984, and 1988 after real disposable income had grown 4 per cent or more.

7. *If unemployment is falling, the incumbent party wins.* True, according to Michael S. Lewin-Beck of the University of Iowa, for all five times since World War II when the unemployment rate fell in the second quarter of the election year (1948, 1964, 1972, 1984, 1988).

Conversely, the incumbent party lost in five out of six election years when the unemployment rate was flat or rising (1952, 1960, 1968, 1976, and 1980). The one exception: Eisenhower's re-election in 1956.

8. *When either the UK or the United States swings left or right the other follows.* Peter Kellner of the London *Independent* points out that for more than four decades U.S. presidential and UK parliamentary elections have tracked each other precisely; when either country has shifted to the right or left the other country has followed at its next election. The last occasion was Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 following Margaret Thatcher's 1979 victory. Britain will vote this year.

9. *The taller of the two main candidates wins.* True in 22 of the 23 presidential elections in this country. The one exception was when the unelected President Ford lost very narrowly to Jimmy Carter, who was the beneficiary of the nation's post-Watergate, post-Vietnam, anti-Republican mood.

This is a good omen for President Bush, who is 6′ 2″. All the declared Democratic candidates are shorter except for Clinton, who is the same height. Bradley—6′ 5″—is not running.

—HUMPHREY TAYLOR

Mr. Taylor is President and CEO of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

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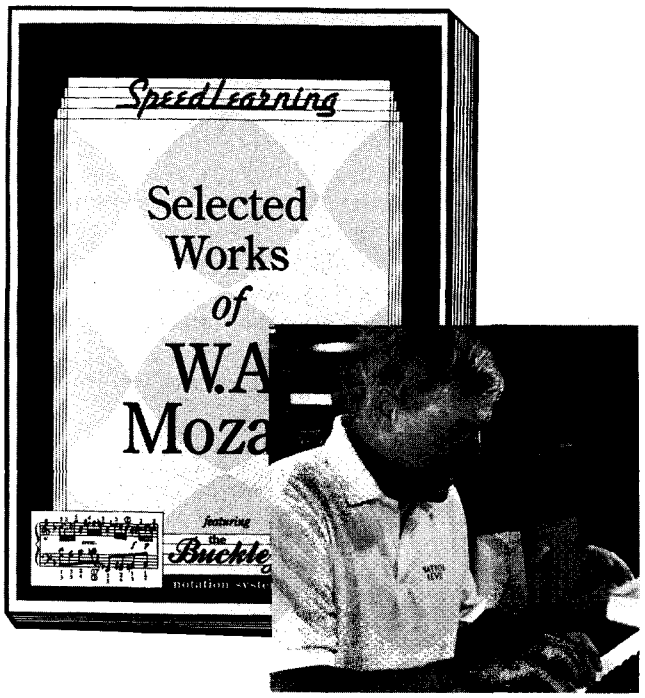
Mozart's Greatest Hits ... The Buckley Way!



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That's the bad news. The good news is that the economic policies he supports would not only offset the bad effects of his "trade hawkishness," but would probably render trade retaliation unnecessary. "My objection is to the fact that the only enterprise zone George Bush has ever created is Mexico," Buchanan has said. "With what he has done with small business, and the rules and regulations and taxes he's imposed on business, he has made it extremely attractive for manufacturers to leave the United States." He would sharply reduce the capital-gains tax rate, undo Bush's regulatory burdens, freeze government hiring and spending, and so on.

In the Oval Office

A PRESIDENT Buchanan would look out for the interests of that underrepresented and exploited class: taxpayers. And he would be willing to fight. That's what the liberals mean when they say he is "angry." He doesn't accept at face value the claims of minority groups with accredited victim status and accusation privileges. He's highly skeptical of recipient groups in general. He would veto quota legislation. He would give the environmental fanatics a run for their money. He would be on television with choice remarks about government-subsidized needle exchange for junkies and condom distribution to school children and taxpayer funds to pornographers. The battle lines would then be drawn and maybe—just maybe—a critical mass of people would bestir themselves from their television sets and sports contests and sit up and take notice of what is going on in this country.

It's not just that Buchanan would put up a fight. The big difference between him and the country-club types who have kept control of the ever-shrinking GOP is that Pat Buchanan understands that *we are in a fight*. Bush doesn't. If he did he would fight, too, for it's not courage that he lacks, but convictions; or rather the right convictions. Bush does have convictions, but they are mostly liberal: he does too want a civil-rights bill, he does too want to be the environmental President, he does too want to be the education President, he does too want handicapped legislation, he does too want the gays to love him and the teachers to love him and the civil-rights activists to love him and the greens to love him. Buchanan can get through the day knowing full well that they don't and they never will.

Probably the most important weapon at the disposal of the President is the news media. It is an amazing thing that Republicans have scarcely learned this; that with television it is possible to play offense, to alter the political dynamics, to set the agenda, and not merely react to the Democrats. For a while, Reagan did understand it, actually going to TV and appealing to voters to implement his policies. This caused tremendous concern inside the Beltway, but then they somehow had Reagan bottled up and that was that.

A Buchanan candidacy is exciting precisely because we know that he wouldn't hesitate to play offense. He relishes the prospect. He calls for "the politics of clarity." Consensus and compromise "haven't done it for 25 years," he said recently. "Why not try something new?" Something new is coming sooner or later: the assaults of liberal fanaticism on decency and common sense can only continue unresisted for so long. □

Hocus Pocus

NO NEW TAX CUTS

George Bush is finally fighting for a capital-gains cut, right? Read the fine print.

LAWRENCE A. KUDLOW

AT FIRST BLUSH President Bush's State of the Union message looked like a winner. Reversing his high-tax 1990 budget, the President's 1992 State of the Union speech clearly articulated an expansionary fiscal message with a series of across-the-board tax cuts—and a regulatory freeze. Delivered in a serious and firm manner, the President's speech was clearly aimed at economic recovery.

True enough, some of the tax-cut proposals, especially the temporary reduction of withholding rates, are rather gimmicky. So is the accelerated depreciation investment-tax allowance, which would last only one year, roughly equivalent to a 1 per cent temporary investment tax credit rather than a more sizable permanent reduction in the cost of business capital. And the Administration failed to reduce the cost of labor or make it easier for small-business owners to hire new workers by rolling back the payroll-tax rate or by dropping the 15 per cent lower- and middle-income tax bracket by a few percentage points.

This said, the Bush package does provide important tax relief to savers, first-time homebuyers, uninsured health-care recipients, and inner-city housing tenants and minority small businesses. But standing at the center of the pro-growth initiative was the President's unexpected announcement of a 15.4 per cent capital-gains tax rate. It signaled an important victory for Jack Kemp, Vin Weber, Bob Kasten, and other supply-siders who had lobbied hard in the run-up to the State of the Union.

On the surface this proposal looked like great medicine to cure the economic ills of the U.S. By lowering the cost and raising the return on capital, the proposed capgains tax reduction of nearly 50 per cent would have spurred new business start-ups, created much needed new jobs, raised real-estate values, and substantially lowered the budget deficit. At a time when the bankers' credit crunch still inhibits prospects for economic recovery, deep capital-gains tax relief might have generated as much as $350 billion in

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capital realizations—essentially providing the economy with an enormous bank loan.

But what the right hand giveth, the left hand is apparently poised to taketh away. Buried away in the fine print of the details published by the U.S. Treasury is a sentence that says that the 45 per cent capital-gains exclusion would be added back into income for alternative minimum tax (AMT) purposes. In effect, a good many investors would face a capgains rate close to 24 per cent rather than 15.4 per cent as a result of AMT. Indeed, for some taxpayers the AMT provision would actually *raise* the marginal tax rate on capital gains to 30 per cent.

The AMT was introduced in the 1986 Tax Reform Act and set at a rate of 21 per cent, which was raised to 24 per cent as part of the 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. The purpose of AMT was to ensure that supposedly high-income individuals (including those enjoying a onetime capital gain) paid a certain minimum percentage of income in taxes.

To compute an individual's minimum tax liability, a taxpayer has to add back so-called "tax preferences" into taxable income. These preferences include most deductions and personal exemptions—the major exceptions being interest on a mortgage used for purchase of a home and charitable contributions. From this total, the taxpayer deducts a $40,000 exemption to arrive at his income for AMT purposes. If his AMT income is above $150,000, this $40,000 exemption is scaled down by $1 for each $4 of income above $150,000 and completely eliminated for incomes above $310,000. This is equivalent to the marginal AMT rate being pushed up to 30 per cent for incomes between $150,000 and $310,000.

Bush's proposal is for the 45 per cent capital-gains exclusion to be treated as a tax preference and added back into income for AMT purposes. Consequently, if a capital-gains realization represents a sizable portion of a person's income in any year, that person could be caught in the AMT net and pay a marginal capgains rate of 24 per cent. What's more, ordinary income plus capital-gains realizations which add up to between $150,000 and $310,000 generate a marginal capgains rate of 30 per cent as a result of the phaseout of the $40,000 exclusion, almost twice the stated rate in the President's proposal.

Consider the case of Joe and Mary Six-Pack, who earn $60,000 a year and are undecided whether or not to sell their family business and realize a onetime capital gain of $100,000. The Six-Packs are married with two children and do not itemize their deductions. If they do not realize their gain, their adjusted gross income is $60,000 and their taxable income is

$43,800 (their AGI less $16,200 in personal exemptions and the standard deduction). This puts them in the 28 per cent bracket and the Six-Packs would pay $7,610 in total taxes.

If Joe and Mary realize the gain of $100,000, they would have to add $55,000 (the non-excluded portion of their capgain) to their taxable income. This would be taxed at 28 per cent (or $100,000 x 15.4 per cent), resulting in an additional $15,400 in taxes and total taxes paid of $23,010 (=$15,400+$7,610). If there were no AMT or if the $45,000 capital-gains exclusion were not treated as a tax preference, that would be the end of the story.

Unfortunately it is not. For AMT purposes the *entire* gain is treated as income, resulting in AMT income of $160,000. Since this is $10,000 over the income level at which the $40,000 AMT exemption begins to be phased out, the Six-Packs lose $2,500 from the $40,000 AMT exemption. Thus for AMT purposes their taxable income is $122,500 (=$60,000+$100,000–$37,500) and their tax is $29,400 (24 per cent of $122,500).

So Joe and Mary pay an additional $6,390 in taxes as a result of the operation of AMT, resulting in $21,790 of taxes paid or an average capgains rate of 21.8 per cent. However their *marginal* rate on additional capital gains is even higher. Suppose the sale resulted in an additional capital gain of $1,000. They would have to pay $240 in AMT, plus they would lose another $250 from the $40,000 exemption, which would add a further $60 to their tax bill. The resulting $300 paid on a marginal gain of $1,000 is a marginal capgains rate of 30 per cent.

The Reality

SO THE Bush proposal does not cut the capital-gains rate on large realizations by anything like the 45 per cent that is advertised. Instead, the change is likely to push many people into AMT if they realize large capital gains, strongly discouraging people from realizing capital gains.

Since the capital-gains tax is paid only when the gain is realized and avoided altogether if the asset is passed on as an inheritance, many people will simply choose to keep them locked up in their current form. There will be no flood of realizations such as in 1986 when investors had their last chance to realize gains at a 20 per cent rate before the capgains exclusion was eliminated by the 1986 Tax Reform Act, or the tripling of realizations (from $50 billion to $160 billion) when the capital-gains tax rate was reduced in two steps from 48 per cent (1978) to 20 per cent (1981).

Nor will the economy receive the sort of incentivized growth acceleration many were hoping from higher capital returns. At present there are roughly $2.5 trillion in unrealized capgains. This capital will not be rechanneled into new and more profitable directions because of the AMT provision. So the surge in new business creation, so vital for new jobs, may not materialize.

A true 15.4 per cent capgains rate would amount to a 45 per cent reduction in the present rate. Realizations might then have doubled from $160 billion in 1988–89 to over $300 billion in 1992–93. This would have provided a tremendous shot in the arm for the

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economy, which in turn might have grown by at least 3.5 per cent to 4 per cent, roughly in line with the eight prior recoveries of the post–World War II period. With this kind of recovery growth, the budget deficit under Bush's policy assumptions could have been virtually eliminated by 1997.

However, with only a minor cap-gains tax cut, realizations will probably rise by only a small amount, perhaps another $20 billion per year. Under these circumstances the anemic average 2.9 per cent real GDP recovery rate in the OMB economic assumptions seems just about right, and it makes virtually no dent in the longer-run deficit outlook. Indeed fighting for a measly 4 per cent drop in the capital-gains tax rate, or perhaps none at all, at the political risk of a major income-tax rate hike to 38 to 40 per cent, is a game which is clearly not worth the candle. □

Unendangered Species

WHERE MANY AN OWL IS SPOTTED

Loggers on welfare while spotted owls flourish—but ecologists don't give a hoot.

JAMES OWEN RICE

IN JANUARY, the United States Forest Service (USFS) set aside 7 million acres for the northern spotted owl. The cost—from 33,000 to 100,000 well-paid logging industry jobs—is comparable to last month's GM layoffs of 74,000 auto workers. But the owl requires these "dwindling patches of the West's virgin forests" to survive, as the *Wall Street Journal* once reported.

Misreported, actually. There is an impressive array of evidence that spotted owls are thriving on millions of acres of privately and publicly managed second-growth forests—the kind that grow up after logging. This evidence was acknowledged by the report of the Jack Ward Thomas Committee (composed of owl experts from USFS, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management and National Parks Service) which, however, declared the owl a "threatened species" under the terms of the Endangered Species Act and recommended setting aside vast old-growth reserves. But to do so, it had to ignore its own finding that "forest structure is more important than tree age" in determining a habitat's suitability for the owl.

The spotted owl requires a forest structure that consists of large trees with cavities or platforms of debris for nesting, multilayer tree canopies (trees of different heights) with moderate to high crown closure (viewed from above, the ground would be hidden), and ample dead and down woody material. The owl was declared threatened on the assumption that clearcutting of such forests would wipe out a habitat that had taken well over a century to grow from bare ground. The problem with this reasoning is that there are many ways to preserve the necessary forest structure short of a complete ban on logging, or regulation so heavy it has the same effect.

Lowell Diller, a zoologist, has found some of the highest owl densities anywhere on 400,000 acres of land owned by the Simpson Timber Company, less than 2 per cent of which is old growth. For three years, Diller studied the northern spotted owl on Simpson's extensive holdings in the California redwood belt. His findings, fully peer reviewed by the American Ornithological Union and praised by the Thomas committee, demonstrate that second-growth forests can provide a suitable owl habitat.

This is important: 95 per cent of the redwoods in northern California are fast-growing second growth, which can reach a stunning 150 feet in fifty years. Perhaps the most remarkable property of redwoods, unique among American conifers, is an ability to sprout new growth right from a cut-over stump and its roots. Moreover, coast redwood forests develop the needed multilayer canopy rapidly because the redwood's associated understory species, tanoak, also stump sprouts. Because stump-sprouting is enhanced by full sunlight and retarded by shade, a consensus among north-coast foresters supports clearcutting—however unwise and unpopular it may be in other locations—as the best way to log redwoods.

Indeed, scientists believe that the sprouting redwood stumps make a habitat *superior* to old growth for two species the owl relies upon as prey in the region: the wood rat and the brush rabbit. Wood rats (80 per cent of the owl's diet in the redwood zone) build their elaborate stick nests (as high as 15 feet) around the sprouting stumps; their populations actually peak in young-growth stands (between ten and thirty years) and decline to nearly zero in old growth. The greater availability of prey can make managed forests a better owl habitat.

Steve Self, a wildlife biologist working for Sierra Pacific, the largest private timberland owner in California, stresses that, given a minimum of forest structure for nesting and roosting, it is the prey base that ultimately determines the suitability of the habitat. The wood rat thrives on the leafy vegetation that grows in clearcuts.

The owl thrives to the east of the California redwood zone, in the mixed conifer forests dominated by lofty stands of Douglas fir, pine, and true fir. Mr. Self notes that "this region has a history of selective harvesting [cutting individual trees] rather than clearcuts, so we have a mosaic of different forest conditions. So far, on our property, which is mostly second growth, we have not found any areas where we do *not* have owls."

Since the owl was declared threatened in July of 1990, private lands in

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California have been logged only under complex U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulations. Mr. Self notes, "the Fish and Wildlife Service says if we follow our written plan we will not 'take' [disrupt the biological processes of] any spotted owls. So they agree that we can manage our forests and have owls, too."

It may even be possible to extend the owl's range with artificial nests. Wildlife biologist Steve Kerns of Pacific Lumber has put up experimental nest boxes (analogous to the "wood duck" boxes put up by concerned citizens to save the wood duck back in the early days of the environmental movement) in which spotted owls have successfully raised young. Diller believes even that level of intervention may be unnecessary in the redwood zone because owls use abandoned flying-squirrel and red-tree-vole nests.

These animals, along with the Pacific fisher (a weasel), are also often falsely cited in the press as doomed without rigid protection of old-growth forests. In fact, "we have seen Pacific fishers in second-growth stands and followed their tracks in the snow," Diller says.

Mainstream accounts miss other scientific subtleties. An important one is the difference, or lack thereof, between the northern spotted owl and the California spotted owl, officially another subspecies. The California spotted owl, officially "non-threatened" for now, thrives in second-growth forests in the coast mountains that stretch from San Diego County to the south of San Francisco, as well as in the vast Sierra Nevadas. (A third subspecies, the Mexican spotted owl, proposed for "threatened" status last November, inhabits two mountain ranges that stretch from the five mountain states of the Southwest to central Mexico.)

The subspecies classification is controversial, in part, because the blood tests normally used to distinguish subspecies show no genetic difference between the northern and California owls. The two were declared separate under the belief that they were distinct populations which did not cross the Pitt River, which feeds into Lake Shasta. We now know that that is not true: owls have been found within a hundred yards of the river—and their range is two hundred miles. Because the bureaucracy has yet to catch up with science, we are paying an inordinate social cost, not to mention economic, to guard a "separate" population of northern owls.

The forests of the southern Sierra Nevadas, mostly second growth but leavened by the old-growth reserves in wilderness areas and Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks, provide millions of acres of spotted-owl habitat. Moreover, in 1987 researchers for the USFS Pacific Southwest Experiment Station discovered spotted owls living year round in foothill canyons filled with oaks and sycamores at low elevations, miles from the higher altitude conifer forests—areas, in other words, that are dry and tough: not the sort of place "vulnerable" owls ought to appear. Indeed, a draft USFS report on an owl monitoring study of forested

Jennifer Lawson

federal lands in California found owls on fully 75 per cent of all sites—sites selected randomly, "without regard to suitability for spotted-owl habitat."

Donald Neal, who retired recently after 34 years at the experiment station, notes that each pair of owls requires thousands of acres of habitat, and until recently were seldom observed by ornithologists. The likeliest error in the USFS study would be an undercount—indeed, the owl population in the Sierras may well "not be much lower than it was historically, because the selective logging done here accidentally produced the forest structure the owl requires."

This would explain why our actual counts of the "threatened" owl keep rising. A 1986 Audubon Society "blue ribbon" committee of owl experts concluded that owl-conservation efforts should be directed at maintaining a minimum population in Oregon, Washington, and California of 1,500 pairs of spotted owls, including 300 to 400 pairs of California owls thought to inhabit the Sierra Nevadas. Since then, spotted-owl counts have risen dramatically: the real count in Oregon and Washington alone stands at 2,170 nesting pairs and hundreds of single birds. California surveys during 1990 showed 1,868 owls (including both subspecies) on federal lands, and about 900 on private lands. Lowell Diller has found 350 northern owls on Simpson lands, which represent only about 8 per cent of productive private forests in northern California. These counts are not complete censuses, Gordon Gould of the California Fish and Game Department points out, because the land areas involved are simply too vast.

Which raises a question: Since the northern owl is less distinct and vulnerable than originally reported, and does not depend exclusively on the valuable land that has now been set aside for it, why have we put so many people out of work? The story common in timber and environmental circles alike is that the owl is just an excuse to preserve the old-growth forests, long a goal for environmentalists. The endangered species act was just the best law on the books for that purpose.

One can understand the impulse to preserve natural beauty, but while some companies mismanage land, many more do as well or better than the government. An industry group, the Northwest Forestry Association, calculates that there are some 19 million acres of publicly held forest in Oregon and Washington in which logging is already barred; over a third of that area is old growth, and some four million acres are suitable spotted-owl habitat. And there are other goods besides preserving old growth that we need to pursue—even other environmental goods.

Some argue we need to preserve "biodiversity," a diversity of species and habitats. But as Diller points out, "a mosaic of younger and older forests yields more biodiversity than an unbroken expanse of old-growth forest."

Sensible environmental scientists like Diller and Neal may yet be heard in environmental and government circles—even if the media continue to ignore them. Larry Irwin, a former wildlife biology professor and the author of a large body of spotted-owl research, is now wildlife program director for the National Council for Air and Stream improvements in Corvallis, Oregon. "I don't know that managed forests can accommodate spotted owls across the entire geographic range of the owl, but I am very confident that we can do it

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in California, parts of Oregon, and parts of the east side of the Cascades in Washington. . . . The distribution of the owl's requirements—food, cover, and water—is certainly broader than old-growth forests. In the long run, we must have a balance."

Even our political system may eventually produce that. All but the greenest of the region's politicians are moving to support Interior Secretary Lujan's reexamination, of the spotted owl decisions. Owl, spare that woodman. □

Moscow Nights

WITHOUT MARX OR CHEKHOV

Free intellectuals undermined Gorbachev and elevated Yeltsin. Now what?

DAVID BROOKS

IF SOMEONE were to write a *Cherry Orchard* for the class of Soviet intellectuals that is now vanishing, it would be set in one of Moscow's hundreds of research institutes, and the offstage sound of the rising class would be the laser printer, belonging to the joint venture renting space down the hall.

The intellectuals are passing from power in Moscow, and it is a melancholy passage. They were the last leisured class, paid salaries by these institutes, but not really expected to do much but talk (democracy and capitalism, as it turned out). They had an aristocrat's free time for self-cultivation, but paid in rubles. They had no opportunities for decadence.

And during *glasnost*, they were important. They formed hundreds of organizations that they called parties but which were really discussion clubs or excuses to found a newspaper. Their democratic movement, which coalesced under the umbrella group Democratic Russia, became the driving force of anti-Communism. They never had practical power, but with their speeches and writings they undermined the morale and self-confidence of the ruling apparatus. A reporter who sat with these democrats in their offices at the Moscow City Soviet, or in the Russian Parliament building, or especially at night around their kitchen tables, got an inside view of the engines of change.

Alas, no more. Anti-Communism was the movement's genetic program, and with the Communist Party disbanded, the democratic movement is disintegrating (Democratic Russia hopes to stay together long enough to cheerlead for Yeltsin's economic reforms). The usual ideological splits have appeared; social-democratic Gorbophiles have recently flooded the democratic press with vitriolic attacks on Yeltsin. Other democrats have proved themselves good anti-Communists but bad reformers, turning elected office into an opportunity for bribery. And many democrats have not yet learned the difference between executive power and totalitarianism. They have criticized Yeltsin's political apparatus, which roughly mirrors political appointments emanating from, say, a French-style executive branch, as a new manifestation of Stalinisn.

But more importantly, intellectuals have drifted into the burgeoning private sector; a good friend from the U.S.A.–Canada Institute who used to shepherd me around democratic circles has become a Moscow representative for an American pharmaceutical corporation and no longer has time for politics.

Many of the old leading figures find themselves marginalized. The historian Yuri Afanasyev has complained of the way he has been passed over for top Yeltsin administration posts in favor of Mr. Yeltsin's old cronies from the Sverdlosk Communist Party and a group of young turks under the leadership of economist Yegor Gaidar. "The democrats felt they were heavily invested in Mr. Yeltsin's victory. But Mr. Yeltsin is not a man who pays dividends," says Vladimir Pastukhov, a leading intellectul and consultant to the Russian Parliament who has now gone off to found a law firm.

When I think of the democratic intelligentsia in its heyday, I think of a personality type that could be called Kasparov Man, named after its prototype, the world chess champion. He is in his mid to late thirties (Kasparov, precocious, is actually much younger) and his background is technical rather than artistic: mathematics, chemistry, economics, astrophysics. He is a master of contempt, and feels he is living in a world run by imbeciles. He is not unsure, casting about for the correct answers. The immediate answers are obvious—democracy and capitalism. His self-imposed task is to smash the idiots who stand in the way.

Kasparov Man views a Westerner as a child, complacent, self-satisfied, who cannot begin to understand the brutal chaos of Russian life. He sees Western literary circles as hopelessly effeminate. He has none of the rococo mannerisms of our intellectuals, but values bluntness, rudeness, and arrogance. Living under the meaningless verbiage of the government rhetoric, he has a passion for calling things by their true names. His own conversation, punctuated by an icicle laugh, reminds you somehow of Charles Bronson in *Death Wish*. No prisoners are taken, no fools are spared, the Communists were often known simply as the "fascist criminals." He tends to exaggerate for effect.

The democratic intellectuals were not dissidents; the dissident movement had faded with *glasnost*. These were hard young men who were personally ambitious. They rejected the soft and moralistic politics of, say, a Vaclav Havel and had no taste for defeats dressed up as moral victories. They did not indulge, for example, in hunger strikes, or in other forms of

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symbolic politics. Unlike the idealistic students of Tiananmen Square, they would not have built a Statue of Liberty out of papier-mâché. They were never cuddly or picturesque.

"If people think they can rule with a moral mantle, they will fail. Politics is a professional business. People understand there is no place for morality in politics," the young but unidealist Mr. Pastukhov told me two years ago.

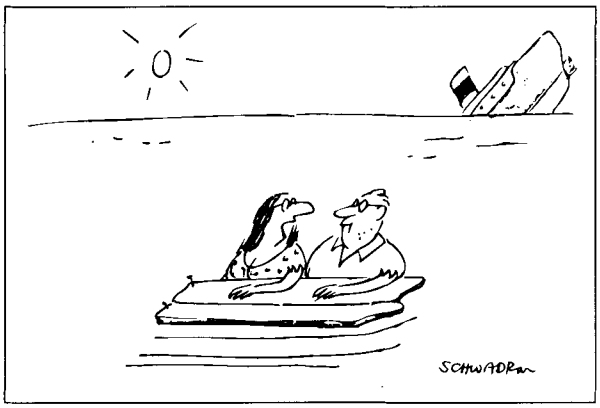
I'd dragged Mr. Pastukhov into a hard-currency bar, and he ordered a can of orange soda (maddeningly, these democrats were usually spartan, and didn't get drunk). Drawing lessons from the Russian crises of the seventeenth century, he was describing the "logarithm of reform": First the ruling class understands the national crisis. In response, it asks the intelligentsia for help. Then, the ruling class becomes afraid of the intelligentsia's influence and relations deteriorate. Finally, denied access to power, the intelligentsia fractures, some opposing all reforms, others radicalizing and advocating overthrow.

I looked down and noticed him twisting and pulling at the pop-top of the soda can, the like of which he'd obviously never seen. Twenty minutes later, his conversation unbroken, he simply jammed his thumb through the perforated lid.

Their brilliance was accompanied by, perhaps caused by, a child-like naïveté toward normal Western knowledge—a soda can, good restaurants, and the social significance of MTV.

Their hatred of Communism—and by 1989, Mr. Gorbachev—was searing. That repugnance dominated their conversational tone. Next to them, NATIONAL REVIEW was soft on Communism. Over dinner one night Joe Klein of *New York* magazine observed that everything sophisticated New Yorkers's hate, sophisticated Moscovites love: Ronald Reagan, Marlboros, the South in the American Civil War. For an American conservative it was like coming upon a lost continent that had taken as its creed the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, but which held those views in purified form. I lost count of the number of times Reagan's "evil empire" speech was quoted to me. One grey Sunday afternoon a fellow who had worked with Richard Perle in the Defense Department and I visited the home of a democratic couple. "The Reagan arms build-up was a most important factor that produced some liberalization in our country," one of the democrats, Boris Pinsker, said toward the end of our visit. "Everybody will say this. It's the sort of thing you feel in your skin." The former Pentagon official puffed out his chest and smiled.

"Because of lack of basic foods, the stability of the country will be shaken.



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"Harley, isn't it a waste of time to argue over whether this is a piece of flotsam or jetsam we're clinging onto?"

Now we have only half-hunger. soon it will be real hunger," he said. "It seems that we can expect attempts to establish order in the country, the use of the army. There will be bloody outbursts. Then some kind of military rule will be inevitable, with Gorbachev or without."

"What about you? Will there be mass arrests?"

"We cannot rule out this possibility. But more likely the democrats will be killed."

The sky outside was now black but neither my host nor his wife turned on the light. They had a touch of a stage manager about them, for the apartment filled with a somber gloom that was correlative to our talk.

Russians are famous for their pessimism, for the bitter pride they take in their sufferings. One could see in the intelligentsia's attitude the serf's pride in his ability to endure the knout, and Liza's heroic resignation before cruel fate in Turgenev's *Home of the Gentry*. Even in victory, the democrats are having trouble adjusting to the fact that times may get better.

Some of the democrats developed a connoisseur's attitude toward pessimism. Isaiah Berlin said something of the nineteenth-century Russian intellectuals that is true today: "The more difficult, the more paradoxical, the more unpalatable a conclusion is, the greater is the degree of passion *and* enthusiasm with which some Russians, at any rate, tend to embrace it." *Glasnost*-era democrats measured their commitment to democracy by their ability to labor on for its sake even when all hope of immediate success had vanished.

In general, the democrats have repudiated the intellectual style and manners of their nineteenth-century counterparts. They no longer look to novelists and poets for political guidance. They no longer see artists as specially equipped moral seers. They no longer believe that Russia will find its own separate course to utopia. But there is one quality today's intelligentsia had inherited from their progenitors—the taste for talking endlessly about this thing called "the Russian soul."

There were five of us in Larissa Piasheva's small living room, all of us staring at the floor while she spoke in a low monotone, so it was like a morose huddle:

> There is a picture of a deformed child on the cover of *Moscow News*. [He was born near Chernobyl, with a twisted torso and grotesque stumps for legs.] That is symbolic of the appearance of the soul of the Soviet people at this moment. The entire country is infected with this internal disease. We've gone through a genocide of all spiritual life in the country. Food is not the worst of our problems. The people destroy the conditions necessary for their own survival.
>
> Just look at our buildings, at our parks and squares. The places where we live look like a cattle barn. Everything is disgusting. This isn't being done by the Communists. The people do it themselves. The Bolshevik inclination to smash and destroy has become a habit, as is the inability to engage in constructive work. They made our people slaves.

Every nation has its characteristics but no other nation, except perhaps Germany, is so obsessed with this idea of a national soul. It took us beneath the prosaic concerns of politics and economics and into some profound and mysterious realm. It made all politics seem like an internal struggle: the war between the inherited slave mentality and the dawning consciousness of independent man. Sud-

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denly we weren't talking policy but something heroic. A discussion of economic reform suddenly became literature in the land of Solzhenitsyn.

It was magical for a journalist who otherwise spends his time thinking about such things as GATT rounds. But really what was this all about? What is this thing called the Russian soul that is so timeless and impervious to incentives and self-interest?

The session with Piasheva was pre-coup. When I called another democrat on the second day of the coup, he enthused about the diversity of people who had gathered outside the Russian Parliament building. Businessmen provided millions of rubles to feed the defenders, workers provided transportation; even students, until then totally apathetic, took part. The Russian soul, evidently, was not completely rotten. And this winter, visiting honest-to-God private enterprises, where the goals were rational and the pay sensible, I saw Russians working hard, not stealing and being creative.

As if revealing a family secret, more than one intellectual confided to me that the intelligentsia, when you get down to it, really doesn't understand the country. The gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses, dating from the days of Peter the Great, is too wide. The reformed Communists such as Boris Yeltsin and Ukrainian leader Leonid Kravchuk, I was told practically in a whisper, have so easily usurped the democratic agenda because they know the people. The intelligentsia still has no faith in the populace, considering the bulk of them are lazy or dishonest, and ready to back the first authoritarian that comes along. Their close contact with Western reporters explains the unduly pessimistic tone of recent media coverage.

But being wrong about the prospects for democracy does not take away from their clarity of purpose on behalf of democracy. The democratic movement didn't produce any great works of literature, or startling literature, or startlingly new ideas, but it did cleanse away a lot that was bad, not only Communist power but also the intellectual habits that led to Communism: the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia's contempt for science and forms of law, the taste for moral indignation and self-righteousness, the impatient search for absolutes, the indifference to liberty, the faith in state power. The West will enter the twenty-first century immeasurably wealthier than Russia. But Russia will have the advantage of an intellectual climate in many ways superior to our own. □

Out, Damned Bard

UNWILLINGLY TO SCHOOL

What books should *every* American kid read? Where do we stop?

CHESTER E. FINN JR.

BARBARA Lerner's provocative essay ["How Shakespeare Can Save Our Kids," Jan. 20] contains food for thought, but the meal is not so well cooked as we've come to expect from her, and some of its ingredients turn out to be ersatz.

We are accustomed to taking Miss Lerner seriously when she turns her formidable intellect and deft pen to the causes and remedies of education melt-down. Whether she is looking at the depredations of judicial activism, the efficacy of testing as a reform strategy, the baneful consequences of modern educators' obsession with student "self esteem," or a dozen other issues, she has generally shown herself to be well informed, clear eyed, and sensible.

This time, alas, she didn't maintain that standard. Though there are some worthwhile insights to be found in it, her analysis proceeds from a fundamental misreading of the Bush/Alexander "America 2000" strategy, through a major distortion of my own (and Diane Ravitch's) writings about education, to a policy recommendation that manages to be quaint, shrewd, and naïve all at once.

Miss Lerner states that Education Secretary Lamar Alexander's reform plan centers on the notion of a "national curriculum" and that such a curriculum would consist exclusively of "information," i.e. factual knowledge. Both suggestions are erroneous. America 2000 does propose that (voluntary) national standards be set in the five core subjects enumerated in the goals previously established by the President and governors (English, math, science, history, and geography), and that a new (voluntary) national examination system be created at grades four, eight, and twelve to track the progress of children and schools in relation to those standards.

National standards and exams are not a national curriculum, however. Standards say what result should be produced, not how to go about it. Running a mile in four minutes is an example of a standard. So is getting your cholesterol below 200, or your new car's gas mileage above 25. None of those standards says what to do in order to achieve the desired outcome.

The same is true of education, as any accurate rendering of America 2000 makes clear. An English standard might say that twelfth graders should be able *inter alia* to write competent essays. A math standard might say they should be capable of handling quadratic equations. Perhaps the history standard will say they need to be able to contrast the causes and consequences of at least two wars in which the country has been involved. Such standards embody outcomes, not detailed prescriptions of what books are to be read, what lesson plans followed, what discussions held in class, what

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topics taken up in what sequence, etc.

This is no trivial distinction. Even in England, which has lately embraced an explicit "national curriculum," wide latitude remains for schools and teachers. The "law does not require specific textbooks or teaching methods," Susan Chira reported in a recent *New York Times* account. "Rather than listing books, the curriculum says students should read 'a range of fiction, poetry, literary nonfiction, and drama' . . ." Nor, the same article makes plain, have British teachers found such homogeneity of outcomes deeply objectionable: "[S]urveys have consistently found that teachers welcomed the continuity, higher standards and sense of priorities the national curriculum brought."

And that's under a compulsory system. Few observers of U.S. education expect any national standards we set to be mandatory. That's not to say some wouldn't prefer to go farther. E. D. Hirsch, for one, has been urging a full-fledged national core curriculum for elementary schools. I'm still torn myself, agreeing with Hirsch that there is much that all Americans should know in common with one another if the *unum* of our society is not to yield entirely to the forces of *pluribus*; but also agreeing with James Q. Wilson and others that any serious effort toward a national curriculum is apt to fall into the hands of extremists, interest groups, and the foolish-but-ardent denizens of the education establishment.

The Bush–Alexander plan is clearly and unambiguously *opposed* to a national curriculum, and Miss Lerner does it an injustice by claiming otherwise. It also needs to be noted that the standards (and exams) envisioned in America 2000 are not obsessed with factual information in the way that she seems to think. There is no basis for her assertion that Alexander's thinking has been heavily influenced by Hirsch's notion of "cultural literacy."

To the contrary. Whenever I've heard Secretary Alexander give a spontaneous example of the kind of "standards" he has in mind, he cites the work of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). What's noteworthy about the standards developed by this group (and dismaying to other math experts such as John Saxon) is their down-playing of "math facts," computational skills, drills, and practice. Instead they stress math concepts and the solution of complex problems—the very kinds of things Miss Lerner favors. It's a far cry from the preoccupation with "information per se" that she—to my bafflement—asserts is the driving spirit of America 2000.

Though Hirsch had nothing directly to do with it, Diane Ravitch and I did lend a hand in designing the Administration's strategy (and Ravitch, of course, continues to do distinguished public service at the Education Department). But Miss Lerner, however, sorely misrepresents our thinking and writing about education priorities. "[L]ists of specific items of information American kids don't know at various ages are recurrent features of many of their books," she asserts. This is false. The truth is that Ravitch and I are responsible, individually and together, for some 14 books, and precisely *one* of these—*What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* published in 1987—contains such lists. Inasmuch as the point of that volume was to report results on the first-ever national assessment of history and literature knowledge among young Americans, it's not too surprising that we would present the facts, as it were, about the state of factual knowledge. But even in our solitary work of this genre, Ravitch and I lamented the limits of an assessment that, by virtue of its test technology, was not capable of examining much more than factual knowledge; and we took pains to dispel the "false dichotomies" of "concepts *vs.* facts" and "skills *vs.* content." No careful reader of that volume could accurately conclude that we're only interested in "information."

Her own preferred alternative (to a national curriculum) is curious indeed. She urges that the plays of William Shakespeare become our "national book," required in every semester of every high school, and enforced through a national Shakespeare test—on which all diplomas hinge. Talk about narrowing the curriculum down. Talk about imposing a canon. Talk about surrendering pluralism, voluntarism, and choice to some federal Shakespeare commissar.

But there's a touch of genius to the idea, too. For Miss Lerner is certainly correct that "verbal reasoning power" is best developed by "delving deeply into some subject matter" and there's no subject matter in the humanities that lends itself to deeper delving than the works of William Shakespeare. (That, of course, is why every good high-school English class already includes one or more of his plays.)

More than Will Power

BUT Shakespeare isn't sufficient unto himself for the education of young Americans, any more than a splendid steak comprises a full meal. What about math and science? What about the history and literature that hadn't happened by the sixteenth century (including American history)? What about the principles of democracy? Of modern physics? Of languages other than English?

Miss Lerner says she almost included the Constitution and Federalist Papers as "national book number two." She changed her mind, however, when she saw how "abstract" these works are and how lacking in emotional content, especially when (she says) few young people have the relevant background experience to make their abstractions come alive.

I wish she had yielded to her initial impulse. It reminded me of an interesting survey undertaken by William J. Bennett when he was chairman of the Humanities Endowment. He asked hundreds of prominent Americans to suggest what books all youngsters should study in school. The replies varied, of course, but five works led the list: Shakespeare's plays and sonnets; the "founding documents" of the United States (i.e., Declaration, Constitution, Federalist Papers); the Bible; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; and *The Odyssey*. Dickens ranked sixth.

Not a bad list, that. Preferable, by my lights, to any single book. For better or worse, however, I don't believe we're going to find ourselves anytime soon with a "national book," or even five of them. Nor, I think, is Miss Lerner's alarmist version of a national curriculum on the U. S. horizon. What is likely to happen instead is the gradual emergence of voluntary standards in the five subjects noted earlier. This idea recently moved beyond executive-branch rhetoric into the recommendations of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST), a bipartisan group (on

(Continues on page 61)

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Gloria in Excelsis

FLORENCE KING

'SELF-ESTEEM" is currently the bee in every bonnet and the fork in every tongue, so it was only to be expected that Gloria Steinem, the divine afflatus of feminism who has made a career out of leading the herd to trendy saltlicks, would decide to take a crack at it. She took two cracks. The first manuscript she wrote was read by a friend who told her it was too impersonal. "I think you have a self-esteem problem," said the friend. "You forgot to put yourself in."

Of course she forgot. She had been thinking of everyone but herself for years; hopping on planes the moment radical groups needed her, soothing fevered caucuses, tucking in fretful taskforces, living in an apartment with no furniture because she gave all her money away to worthy causes. Her friends called her a "co-dependent with the world," but we of coarser fiber recognize Dickens's Mrs. Jellyby, who made her own children go hungry so she could contribute to the African Children's Milk Fund, and then basked in the accolade, "She does so much for others."

Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem, by Gloria Steinem (Little, Brown, 377 pp., $22.95)

Miss Steinem claims she rewrote the manuscript to include herself, but all we get are four discreet pages about her affair, at fifty, with a fabulously rich tycoon to whom she succumbed, she says, because her self-esteem was at an all-time low, plus a few scattered references to her mother's mental illness that she covered thoroughly in a long essay called "Ruth's Song," published in 1984.

Several mass-circulation reviewers latched on to the 11th-hour affair, giving the impression that the present book is a tell-all confessional about the secret life of Gloria Steinem. It isn't. They fudged, probably to make things easy on themselves, because the book is practically unreviewable; a rambling, monomaniacal exercise in metaphysics à go-go about finding the "inner child" through meditation and achieving cosmic self-esteem in oneness and universality with all things.

She begins by telling us how to say

Chang Park

"self-esteem" in other languages. Not content to stop at the French *amour-propre*, Steinem the compulsive list-maker plows on through Russian, Hindu, classical Greek, Hebrew, Yiddish, Anglo-Saxon (*soelf*), and, of course, Swahili (*kujistahi*). Next she reviews the synonyms in Roget's Thesaurus and then drags us on a usage trip through the *OED*, until the blood-ied and beaten reader concludes that concern for self-esteem is not only ubiquitous, but that the world has talked of little else since time began.

Most books have an epigraph—a brief quotation stating the theme or a line of poetry containing the title. This book has 54, drizzled over each chapter and subchapter in clumps of two or three—one chapter has five. The authors of these nuggets include everyone from Socrates to Susan Sontag, with pitstops at arcana like "Sufi Wisdom, from the Pleasantries of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin."

Then there are the supporting quotations. "As Plato believed . . .," "As Margaret Mead observed . . .," "as J. Konrad Stettbacher illustrated . . .," "as Dorothy Dinnerstein explains . . .," "as Rilke wrote." One after another; Audre Lorde followed by Christopher Isherwood followed by Allison Stallibrass followed by Franz Kafka followed by Patti Davis, who explains why she used to slouch: "We wear our attitudes in our bodies, and I grew up looking like a question mark." Miss Steinem must look like a colon from the many times she skids to a stop and quotes an ostensible authority out of what is obviously a gnawing fear that she herself lacks the authority to speak her mind without support.

Like the dirty-minded who can turn any topic around to sex, she finds her runic obsession everywhere. The revolt in Estonia was "fueled entirely by self-esteem." And economics? "I've noticed, too, that economists have begun to speak in terms of self-esteem . . . economic development without self-esteem is only another form of colonialism." Living under a white male-dominant society robbed the Cherokees of so much self-esteem that they abandoned their Council of Grandmothers. Women who dot their *i*'s with little hearts in obedience to "the smiling cheerful mask the patriarchy forces them to wear" eventually develop depression and eating problems, which are classic signs of low self-esteem. Saddam Hussein's brutal stepfather robbed him of his self-esteem, so he got it back by brutalizing others until George Bush, whose "aristocratic, religious father" beat him with a belt buckle, salvaged his self-esteem by destroying Saddam's.

Acknowledging congenital differences is bad for self-esteem. The belief that some are blessed with creative talent while others are not is a hierarchical concept, so never admit that you can't draw or sing. That means "I can't meet some outside standard. I'm not acceptable as I am." Go ahead and

Miss King's new book, With Charity Toward None: A Fond Look at Misanthropy *(St. Martin's Press), will be published in March.*

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sing like Roseanne Barr Arnold. Go ahead and write like Diane Ackerman, yet another Steinem quotee: "Each night the sunset surged with purple pampas-grass plumes, and shot fuchsia rockets into the pink sky, then deepened through folded layers of peacock green to all the blues of India and a black across which clouds sometimes churned like alabaster dolls."

How to acquire self-esteem? Turn inward, journey backward in time, "reparent" yourself. To invoke the You of sandboxes past she provides a mantra—"I am valuable," "I am well," or just "I am"—and includes a Meditation Guide:

> Take some energizing breaths, inhaling more slowly than you exhale. Count to six as you breathe in, count to three as you breathe out. On the last count, open your eyes. Look at your hands and imagine that a child's hands are inside them. You are one and the same person—but different. You can protect and care for your inner child.

She also provides breathing instructions:

> Just press one nostril closed while inhaling deeply through the other for one count, press both nostrils closed while holding that breath for four counts, and then press the other nostril closed while exhaling for two counts. . . . Yoga tells us this time of being full of breath, full of spirit, is a moment of feeling the true self; the soul.

Miss Steinem went to a "time-travel therapist" to find her inner child. She also talks to her hands: "So I ask them what they have to say for themselves. 'A banner held in liver-spotted hands,' they reply. I get a title for a future article, plus my first inkling that liver spots have a sense of humor."

Do enough of this and you will be a "Universal I," as one with nature and ready to help the ravaged planet salvage its self-esteem, like "the Chipko movement that began in the Himalayan foothills, when women hugged local village trees to save them from the axe." Being as one with nature is essential, because people who have "dominion" over the beasts of the field do not have self-esteem. To prove that species hierarchy destroys our inner peace she combs through nineteenth-century recipes and finds one that says—are you ready?—"Take a red cock that is not too old and beat him to death."

As a final fillip she recommends the development of Multiple Personality Disorder for positive purposes:

> What if we could each gain access to the full range of human qualities that lie suppressed within us? . . . People in different alters can change every body movement, perfect a musical or linguistic talent that is concealed to the host personality, have two or even three menstrual cycles in the same body, and handle social and physical tasks of which they literally do not think themselves capable.

She promises to take us "in concentric circles," and she does. Like most feminist writers, her literary style consists of tossing a word into the water and letting it widen into a sentence. Start with communal, transforming, wholeness, burgeoning, nurturing, synthesizing, sensing, feeling, enhancing, intuiting, invoking, internalizing, seeking, or finding; and you will eventually get a sentence about circadian rhythms, hearing inner "clicks," and looking inward or outward—through a prism, of course—to where the paradigms are.

Much of the book reads like the contents of a 1972 time capsule. Early Women's Lib themes such as Chinese bound feet continue to haunt her, and the clitoris remains the whistlestop between maidenhead and personhood on her train of thought. Clitoridectomy among the Bantu is still happening, and Miss Steinem is still against it. It's an "excision of sexual will," which is bad for self-esteem, she says, and then quotes Adrienne Rich: "The repossession by women of our bodies will bring far more essential change to human society than the seizing of the means of production by workers."

Self-esteem takes many forms. I read this mewling, puking book, but I'm still vertical and able to quote back. When Samuel Johnson was asked to comment on the plot of *Cymbeline*, he replied: "It is impossible to criticize unresisting imbecility." My sentiments exactly. □

Christianity without the Cross

EDWARD C. BANFIELD

THE AUTHORS of these books were antiwar activists in the Sixties. F. Forrester Church, pastor of All Souls (Unitarian-Universalist) Church in New York, says that he "gave up on Bible, family, and flag 25 years ago." In his zeal in those days, he now thinks, he may often have been guilty of extremism. David P. Barash, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington, was a campus radical and is proud of it. Unfortunately the passage of the years does not seem to have brought either man very far toward maturity.

God and Other Famous Liberals: Reclaiming the Politics of America, by F. Forrester Church (Simon & Schuster, 167 pp., $19)

The L Word: An Unapologetic, Thoroughly Biased, Long-Overdue Explication and Celebration of Liberalism, by David P. Barash (Morrow, 256 pp., $18.50)

Having returned to God, family, and flag—perhaps for the same reason that he left them: "it seemed like the thing to do"—Dr. Church finds that they are all roots of liberalism, which is "a temper, a public spirit of openness and generosity." God is the most famous exemplar of this temper and Jesus "comes in a close second." The Holy Spirit ("the most difficult to conceptualize") "is nothing less than a liberal *agent provocateur*." After devoting a chapter to each of these "famous liberals," Dr. Church goes on to describe what he takes to be the same temper in the minds of the American Founders, Lincoln, and some other famous political figures. Finally, he adds "your mother" to the list of famous liberals because the maternal role both models and inculcates liberal values: "hospitality, neighborliness, forgiveness, compassion, tender loving care."

Whatever his qualities as a theologian, Dr. Church is not much of an historian; he asserts, for example, that the words "all men" in the preamble of

Mr. Banfield, professor emeritus of government at Harvard University, is the author of The Unheavenly City *(Little, Brown) and* Here the People Rule *(AEI Press).*

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the Declaration of Independence (which he misquotes) were intended to exclude women and slaves.

If, as Dr. Church believes, American history has always been profoundly liberal, why is liberalism now in popular disfavor? One reason, he says, is because the word *liberal* has become synonymous with big government. This happened in part because the Federal Government is an inefficient and ineffective provider of direct social services. Retreat from federal programs, however, has entailed loss of "the public spirit of compassion and neighborliness." "The social fabric is ripping apart." It is unclear to Dr. Church how this damage may be repaired, but he expects "that it will require far more government supervision than during the Reagan and Bush years: much stricter environmental regulation; a real safety net for the impoverished and underprivileged; programs aimed at the protection and cultivation of our children's lives; a more sharply graduated tax code to close the gap between rich and poor; and strict enforcement and protection of all antidiscriminatory legislation." Beyond that, new partnerships between government and various quasi-public institutions will be needed.

If it was big government that caused the trouble, how can bigger government be expected to mend it? Dr. Church does not say, but he offers reassurance that in the "redemptive community" one will be free to have an abortion and to "follow one's preference in consentual [*sic*] relationships."

Janet Hamlin

Professor Barash has a breezier style than Dr. Church, perhaps because he is accustomed to entertaining undergraduates. "The difference between conservatives and liberals," he writes, "is, in part, whether the country should stick its nose into corporate boardrooms or private bedrooms." Again: "The 1980s were pre-eminently a decade of values: lousy, right-wing values of greed, selfishness, and shortsightedness."

He contends that liberals and conservatives have opposite ideas of the nature of man. Among liberals, he says, there is a deeply held presumption that people are fundamentally reasonable and good, that there are no irreconcilable conflicts, and that the world can be made better. Conservatives, by contrast, tend to see people as moved by passions rather than by reason, as self-serving and prone to violence. Liberals feel guilty about the sins of society whereas conservatives hold to the old idea of individual sin.

In the light of this analysis Professor Barash comes off as the complete liberal: a true believer in the goodness and reasonableness of men. Referring

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to the future of the Eastern European countries, he finds it difficult "to fault Condorcet's enthusiastic anticipation of the 'moment in which the sun will observe in its course free nations only. . . .'" He is critical of liberals who supported the cold war; liberalism can live with Communism "so long as it [Communism] is respectful of human rights." Even Condorcet, one imagines, would have learned by now not to be that trustful of his fellow men.

Neither book has a good word for the market as a provider of material wealth and personal freedom. Professor Barash puts "private greed" in opposition to "public purpose" and Dr. Church complains that "the march of material progress brought with it an orgy of consumption and pollution." We should not sacrifice personal liberty, he says, "we should simply modulate it in such a way that our neighbors too are served." Barash asserts "the cold war has crumbled *in spite of* conservative American policies." The worldwide collapse of socialism goes unremarked in both books. □

Steadfastness

FRED DONOVAN HILL

THIS posthumous collection of essays and occasional writings proves to this reader what he has long suspected: Walker Percy was one of the most intellectual of our writers and one of the sanest of our intellectuals. Edited by Patrick H. Samway, S.J., the book presents the views of the Louisiana novelist and thinker on everything from the uniqueness of man to the "steadfastness" of the Catholic Church. In between there are pungent insights into the novel as cognitive art, standards in literature, the heritage of the South, Bourbon whisky, and the "high seriousness" of the profession of letters. The range of Percy's interests is covered in three generous sections entitled "Life in the South," "Science, Language, and Literature," and "Morality and Religion." A concluding section reprints an interview with Walker Percy from the famed *Paris Review* series and "a self-interview" first published in *Esquire* in 1977.

Signposts in a Strange Land, by Walker Percy (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 428 pp., $25)

The section on the South evokes much of the best and the worst of the region. Although an early opponent of racial oppression, Percy, from his first essays to his last, published writings that depicted a South that was, at least in his view, more attractive than repellent. For Percy there was a southern heritage worth preserving. The essence of that heritage "has to do with the conservative tradition of a predominantly agrarian society, a tradition which at its best enshrined the humane aspects of living for rich and poor, black and white. It gave first place to a stable family life, sensitivity and good manners between men, chivalry toward women, an honor code, and individual integrity."

Minus a certain flamboyance, the passage just quoted might remind us of "the old verities and truths of the heart" of Percy's fellow southerner, William Faulkner. But if his values are similar in some ways, Percy's mode as novelist and thinker differs greatly from those of his southern forerunners. Through the six novels—*The Moviegoer*, *The Last Gentlemen*, *Love in the Ruins*, *Lancelot*, *The Second Coming*, *The Thanatos Syndrome*—the scene is the urban South rather than Faulkner's rural backwaters and Percy's protagonists—Binx Bolling, Will Barrett, Lancelot, Thom-

Mr. Hill is chairman of the Humanities Department at Georgia Military College.

RIGHT BOOKS

■ Appointed by Ronald Reagan to cut the federal payroll and to reform the federal bureaucracy, Donald Devine was successful enough to be called "Reagan's terrible swift sword"—hence the title of his book—in a *Washington Post* profile (*Reagan's Terrible Swift Sword: An Insider's Story of Abuse and Reform within the Federal Bureaucracy*, Jameson Books, 228 pp., $19.95). His success disrupting the entrenched bureaucracy cost him reconfirmation by the Senate.

Swift Sword blames the "Troika"—Baker, Deaver, and Meese—for undermining Reagan's mandate to shrink the Federal Government. The three, along with other "smarties" at the White House, believed domestic policy was best conducted in reaction to the morning's newspaper clippings. As a result, Mr. Devine found it impossible to get the President's imprimatur on reforms to unclog bureaucracy and save taxpayers millions of dollars.

The frustrations Mr. Devine encountered are familiar enough, but, with White House "pragmatists" still holding sway, bear repeating nonetheless. The White House press corps, we're told, passes judgment on nearly all policies and proposals within the West Wing. A few in the Administration dared ignoring the media, and were dealt with accordingly. Mr. Devine recounts the efforts of five—James Watt, Raymond Donovan, James Miller, Gerald Carmine, and Thomas Pauken—and the various "gaffes" and scandals which led to their undoing.

Mr. Devine also makes nuts-and-bolts recommendations on how the federal bureaucracy can be reformed in order to best take advantage of the experience of career bureaucrats, while balancing their power with that of political appointees. The careerists, he cautions, should not be placed in decision-making positions; and political appointees should be carefully chosen, with a view not only to government experience, but to loyalty to the President. The pragmatism Mr. Devine describes has led to the sorry situation in which the current Administration finds itself. Mr. Bush lacks the resolve of Ronald Reagan, who, when determined, made sure "the smart guys ended up regarded as trivial, focusing on image and nuance, whereas the President focused upon substance and spoke to the people's deeply held values." And for reasons Mr. Devine makes clear, now it's the President who gets trivialized, and he has the smart guys to thank for it. —ALLEN RANDOLPH

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as More—are all sophisticated searchers for truth rather than Faulkner's primitives.

In fact, one of the virtues of Percy's fiction is that it takes us *forward* into the modern South in a way that even writers who followed Faulkner in time like Flannery O'Connor and Madison Jones do not. By now it is a critical commonplace to say Percy's fiction reveals more influence from Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, and Gabriel Marcel than from Faulkner, Warren, and Welty. His heroes are existential detectives trying to grasp the clues in a confusing contemporary world that will still give that world meaning.

In "New Orleans Mon Amour," reprinted in *Signposts in a Strange Land* from a 1968 issue of *Harper's*, Percy characterizes New York City as "a vacuum" and, at the other extreme, Mobile, Alabama, as "a pressure cooker." There is, according to Percy, too little human relationship in the one, too much in the other. One is reminded of Emile Durkheim's types of suicides: "egoistic suicide" resulting from isolation from society and "altruistic suicide" resulting from too close an integration into the group. By living in a suburb of New Orleans called Covington, Walker Percy avoided both the vacuum and the pressure cooker.

He also seems to have avoided both egoism and oppression. Two decades ago Alfred Kazin published an article about Percy, the man and work, in which he included this rather uncharacteristic description of a modern writer: "He seems a most domesticated creature, intensely devoted to his family, but also at home with himself."

Yet Percy's vision is anything but smug. The world is a baffling and perilous place. All the novels depict this. Several essays in *Signposts in a Strange Land* make this vision explicit. "The present age is demented. It is possessed by a sense of dislocation, a loss of personal identity, an alternating sentimentality and rage which, in an individual patient, could be characterized as dementia," Percy wrote in 1990, the year he died.

Walker Percy nevertheless found some sources of hope and stability in our ravaged time, some "signposts" of sanity he would frequently expound for the edification of his readers.

First, there is the uniqueness of the human being based on his use of language. Percy finds this human unique-

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ness in the ability to "name" things and thereby give them a value beyond the strictly utilitarian. Only human beings can do this, Percy contends. For other species words like "ball" or "cookie" are merely instigators to action. For us words open up a world of meaning.

Second, Percy places a high value on the cognitive element in literature. Percy rejects utterly the dicta of the logical positivists. For him, "Art is cognitive; that is, it discovers and knows and tells, tells the reader how things are, how we are, in a way that the reader can confirm with as much certitude as a scientist taking a pointer-reading." One is reminded of Goethe's "exact concrete imagination" as a means to truth.

Percy has encouraging words for anyone involved in literary endeavors at any level. He celebrates "the high seriousness, indeed the critical importance, of the profession of letters in this age, whether teaching, writing, scholarship, criticism, or, indeed, reading. In fact . . . the cognitive role of literature at the present time, its success or failure, may be more critical than the combined efforts of NASA, Cal Tech, and MIT."

Although we might regard Percy a cultural conservative in some ways, he does not, at least in the essays collected in *Signposts*, bewail the changes in the Catholic Church following Vatican II. Instead, as a third sign of hope in the modern age, Percy praises the "steadfastness of the Church" and repeatedly points to that doctrinal consistency as a source of personal and societal sanity:

> By remaining faithful to its original commission, by serving its people with love, especially the poor, the lonely, and the dispossessed, and by not surrendering its doctrinal steadfastness, sometimes even the very contradiction of culture by which it serves as a sign, surely the church serves culture best.

Percy is not especially ecumenical. He seems to reflect, at times, an earlier, more aggressive attitude. "The crisis of the Church and the crisis of our youth often manifests itself," he writes, "in young Catholics rebelling against what they perceive as the dryness and ritual prayers of the Church and turning to the emotional appeal of the new evangelicals. Catholics have a lesson to learn here, I am sure, but I give myself permission to indulge my own prejudice . . . and to say that the young person who turns his back on the apostolic Catholic faith with its two-thousand-year-old synthesis of faith and knowledge, art and science, with the sacramental presence of God Himself on the altar, to take up with some guru or Bible-thumper who has no use for sacrament or reason, this young person has in fact sold his birthright for a mess of pottage—or, as some wag put it, a pot of message."

The possibilities of language, the cognitive value of literature, the steadfastness of the Church—add these to the heritage of the South and we see that Percy could still find several sources of hope in the modern labyrinth of anomie and oppression.

Despite its bleak descriptions of the present age, *Signposts* is thus a basically hopeful book. The spiritual survivor of the age must be vigilant, "open to signs," "a stranger in a strange land where the signposts are enigmatic but which he sets out to explore nevertheless." Percy's essential view of man is that of "a wayfarer and a pilgrim."

But that view, he asserts, is the best possible view for the novelist. "Judeao-Christianity is about pilgrims who have something wrong with them and are embarked on a search to find a way out. This is also what novels are about."

All the other major views of our age—Marxism, behaviorism, Freudianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, humanism—fail to provide the novelist with this inspiriting view of a being graced with choice and freed by grace. □

ART

Pop Art Then and Now

ROGER KIMBALL

IN THE early 1960s, the giggle installed itself firmly in art. It was then that art dealers began selling crudely executed images drawn from the funny pages and advertising supplements to the hip and credulous. It was then that such well-known artistic entrepreneurs as Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and Roy Lichtenstein emerged with their signature wares: stacks of Brillo boxes, paintings of soup cans and targets, American flags and comic strips. It was then, in short, that Pop Art arrived, just in time to usher in the Sixties, decade of indulgence and the higher fatuousness.

While the sensibility that Pop Art inaugurated—brittle, mocking, narcissistic—is still very much with us, the phenomenon of Pop Art itself is now history. It is hardly surprising that the art establishment should have bestirred itself to produce its standard encomium: a retrospective exhibition. And how perfectly characteristic that the world's largest exhibition of Pop Art ever mounted, now in the Museum Ludwig in Cologne (January 23 to April 19) and on its way to the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid (June 16 to September 24), should have opened in that most staid and stately of exhibition galleries, London's Royal Academy of Arts, founded by Sir Joshua Reynolds, a pillar of eighteenth-century English art and the first president of the Royal Academy. He who insisted that artists must submit to "the rules of art established by the practice of the Great Masters" cannot have smiled kindly on the presence of Andy Warhol's silk-screened images of Marilyn Monroe or Claes Oldenberg's soft "sculptures" of ladies' shoes in the halls of Burlington House.

And that is the least of it. This sprawling collection of 250 objects —paintings, sculpture, collages—includes works by the full roster of Pop Art stars from Richard Hamilton and Peter Blake through Jasper Johns and H. C. Westermann. Organized by Marco Livingstone, a leading Pop Art aficionado, and Norman Rosenthal, exhibitions secretary of the Royal Academy, the exhibition is intended to be a chronological overview of the development of Pop Art from its inception in the late 1950s out of neo-Dada and advertising art.

It is well to begin by reminding ourselves exactly what we are dealing with here. Jenny Holzer, for example, weighed in with *Truisms*, an LED display that continually flashed such galvanizing observations as A MAN CAN'T

Mr. Kimball writes for The New Criterion.

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KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A MOTHER and CONFUSING YOURSELF IS A WAY TO STAY HONEST. Mike Kelley contributed a tawdry ensemble of five stuffed animals arranged around a blanket. And there was Jeff Koons, who currently has an X-rated show on view in New York's Sonnabend Gallery in SoHo, offering viewers polychromed figurines of a smiling papa bear and mama bear holding hands and waving. Truly, a thing of beauty is a joy forever.

What Messrs. Livingstone and Rosenthal have given us, in fact, is a chaotic agglomeration of bad art, only some of which qualifies as Pop. Nor are their efforts without a polemical or revisionist edge, expressed mainly in the claim that London deserves parity with New York as the cradle of Pop. Some distinction, you might say. But the historical record requires us, alas, to reserve the honor largely for New York. What came to be called Pop Art (the term was first used by the British critic Lawrence Alloway in 1958) emerged gradually in the mid Fifties from a potpourri of art movements. There were British and European antecedents and anticipations, but Pop Art really established itself as such only after an exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York in 1962. This exhibition of "new realists" (as they were then known) first brought together Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenberg, Andy Warhol, Peter Blake, and subsequent Pop Art grandees.

At the center of the Pop sensibility is an attack on seriousness, in life as well as art. As one contributor to the exhibition catalogue put it, in the Pop era "the mood was 'party.' " If Pop Art provided a jokey alternative to the sometimes lugubrious rigors of Abstract Expressionism—a breath of fresh air, it seemed, after all those tortured disquisitions on the meaning of paint—it also represented a deliberate rejection of aesthetic discrimination and artistic quality. Pop was brazenly demotic, unabashedly anti-hierarchical: it gloried in kitsch and exalted bad taste. Pop Art was art with its thumb affixed firmly to the nose.

Nevertheless, large claims have been made for the aesthetic, existential, and even political merits of Pop Art. Thus we have Mr. Livingstone nattering on about "a sense of the tragic" in Andy Warhol's image of Marilyn Monroe and "the classicism of Lichtenstein's studied formality and emotional reticence." Remember that this is about a course silk-screen and a blown-up comic-strip image. Similarly, we find Richard Hamilton's collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* (1956) described as "comparable in importance to Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* in relation to Cubism," which is pretty much like saying that Popeye is "comparable in importance" to *The Venus of Urbino* for Renaissance painting. And then we have Andrew Graham-Dixon, an art critic for the *Independent*, the London newspaper that helped sponsor the exhibition, telling us that "The major works of Pop Art continue to define the quality of modern life." Extraordinary, isn't it, that Mr. Graham-Dixon should have been full of praise for the exhibition that his employer sponsored?

One thing that we hear over and over again is that Pop Art is a "subversive force" that "challenges" or undermines the "hegemony" of the art world, capitalist "commodification,"

μαθήματα: *The things that can be understood or learned*

(mathemata)

"Mr. Cervantes, would you please demonstrate the eleventh proposition?"

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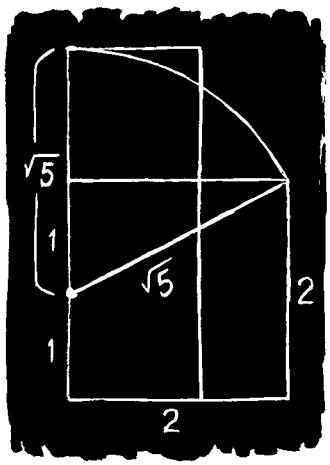
μαθήματα: the learnable.



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etc., through parody and spoof. The rhetoric is as unlovely as the idea. Typical is the observation by Sarat Maharaj in the exhibition catalogue that "Pop Art appears as a subversive force emanating from within the very consumerist myths and representations that it calls into question."

Pop Art is bad art, to be sure; it may even be malevolent in its blithe contempt for aesthetic quality and tradition. But exploitation is not criticism, and Pop Art is no more a "critique" of consumerism than is Michael Jackson. This point was made with consummate insouciance by Larry Rivers, surely one of the most clear-sighted and honest artists to be included in the Pop Art exhibition. In a recent interview published in the British quarterly *Modern Painters*, Mr. Rivers asked: "Are we including Lichtenstein in this anti-materialism? Roy lives down the street here. He's got a big house, he's got a ranch in Scotland, cars. I don't want to hear any of that horse s---."

Andy Warhol once described Dada and Pop Art as "synonyms." But while Pop Art is unimaginable without Dada, there are important differences between the two. This was something that Marcel Duchamp, the father of Dada, understood clearly. In the early decades of the century, Duchamp had scandalized the art world with his "ready-mades," everyday objects torn from their usual contexts and exhibited as art. He presented the public with an ordinary bottle rack or garden rake and said, "This is art!" The public believed him. Even more shocking was *Fountain*, the gleaming white urinal that Duchamp had the audacity to exhibit as art. It all seems rather tame today. But Duchamp's innovations, amounting to an attack on the very idea of art, mapped out virtually all of the moves that Pop Art, conceptual art, and their myriad offshoots have subsequently exploited and codified.

In my view, Duchamp represents one of the greatest disasters in the history of twentieth-century art. If his Dadaist antics finally seemed amusing and even liberating in a world where "art talk" had become altogether too somber and self-absorbed, his influence has been almost wholly pernicious. What Duchamp teaches is nihilism masquerading as impishness. Nevertheless, having perpetrated so many himself, Duchamp knew an art-world fraud when he saw one. And in the phenomenon of Pop Art he recognized the bad faith of those who exploit the gestures of radicalism while embracing the perquisites of conventional success. Late in life, Duchamp called attention to this, noting that

> This Neo-Dada, which they call New Realism, Pop Art, Assemblage, etc., is an easy way out and lives on what Dada did. When I discovered ready-mades, I thought to discourage aesthetics. In Neo-Dada, they have taken my ready-mades and found aesthetic beauty in them. I threw the bottle rack and the urinal into their faces as a challenge and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty.

Duchamp hoped Dada would be a dead end—as indeed it was, aesthetically, spiritually, intellectually. But he underestimated the credulousness of the public and inventiveness of art-world entrepreneurs: together they showed that a great deal of money and social cachet can be found in a dead end. It is no doubt true that art can be about a great many things besides beauty and craftsmanship. The art which we call "sublime" or "profound" or "challenging" or "interesting" often makes no claim to being beautiful or well made. It is not at all clear, however, that art can entirely dispense with beauty and craft without degenerating into a species of anti-art. That was the fate—indeed, it was the announced goal—of Dada, Surrealism, and other twentieth-century movements. The mammoth exhibition of Pop Art now making the rounds reminds us that Pop Art shares this fate. Anyone who believes that this doesn't much matter should recall Andy Warhol's demand that "artists who aren't very good should become like everybody else so that people would like things that aren't very good. It's already happening." Yes, Andy, it is. □

FILM

Reshooting the President

JOHN SIMON

Alan Nahigian

THERE ARE three distinct angles from which Oliver Stone's ***JFK*** must be considered: artistic, historical, and political. For it is not only a feature film but also a polemic revision of history and an incentive to political action. Oliver Stone clearly implies that he has given us a riveting entertainment, the probable (or, more likely, definitive) reconstruction of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and a clarion call for the release of documents ordered sealed until 2029—and thus started a political process that will lead to truth and justice and better government.

One can no more oppose these motives than be against sunlight, fresh air, and good health. But one may question the credibility of Stone's movie, based on the books *On the Trail of the Assassins*, by Jim Garrison, and *Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy*, by Jim Marrs. Many, including prominent journalistic and political figures, have done that, finally rejecting the film as hogwash. There is, to be sure, an aura of arrogance and sensationalism about the filmmaker that invites skepticism and dismissal.

Personally, I know very little about the Kennedy assassination and, worse yet, am open to charges of political analphabetism. I have always sympathized with the autobiographical hero of Anatole France's *Le Lys rouge* who declares, "I am not so devoid of all talents as to occupy myself with politics." Yet this credo, which makes some sense coming from a French artist and

Mr. Simon, NR's film critic, is also theater critic for New York *magazine.*

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intellectual, would foul the breath of an American speaker. For if politics has been one of the two enervating preoccupations in France (need I name the other?), it has trailed just about everything, notably sports, in this country.

Now, I have nothing against sports, but for an entire nation to be besotted with them to the point where for every thousand Americans who can rattle off a litany of football scores and batting averages there may be one who can name his representatives in Congress is another matter. If a fraction of the time America spends on rehashing a basketball game could be reclaimed for informed political discussion, the quality of life would improve immeasurably. This is why I consider *JFK*, even if it makes a slice of Swiss cheese, by comparison, as solid as a glass brick, a salutary phenomenon.

By all means let us reconsider the assassination, remove the seal from all documents for qualified examiners (scholars, elected officials, journalists), and question the motives of all who might have been involved. Even the most far-fetched questioning seems to me healthier than indifference and complacency. And if it takes a movie such as *JFK* to get the ball rolling—well, did anyone ever claim that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a work of art? Stowe or Stone, blue stocking or loudmouth, nemesis or nudge, they also serve.

JFK, though sometimes long-winded, ponderous, or hard to follow, is not to be sloughed off easily. It makes its troubling points forcefully, and at the very least persuades that a single assassin could not have done it all. That it turns Jim Garrison into a much more appetizing figure than he seems to have been or be strikes me as a footling misdemeanor. Whatever its shortcomings, the film conveys the sense of confusion, panic, and impotence at such a dread event, the way witnesses cannot sort out what they have seen. A similar problem confronts me as I try to make sense of what this three-hour movie kept thrusting at me. The trouble with *JFK* is that whereas it solicits a second seeing to unscramble it, it does not offer enough aesthetic compensation to warrant the effort of re-immersion.

Yet what technical knowhow! The interweaving of documentary footage (the Zapruder film) and the stuff shot by Stone, the feel of authenticity and immediacy as these historic scenes are recreated (thanks in large part to Robert Richardson's canny cinematography), and the highly charged, redolent work of performers in small roles—all these dazzle. There are exceptions, though. Garrison himself turns Earl Warren into a denizen of the ghoul-haunted woodlands of Weir, and the gifted English actor Gary Oldman is too rich a presence for the puny Oswald. It may also have been a mistake to cast stars in cameo roles, e.g., Ed Asner (who at least tries to act), Walter Matthau, Donald Sutherland (who are just themselves), and John Candy and Jack Lemmon (who overact).

But what might have been the biggest miscalculation, the casting of Kevin Costner as Jim Garrison, proves a coup. Costner not only delivers a sound performance, but also, by being cast against type, manages to make us—and even himself—forget that he is Kevin Costner. As Mrs. Garrison, Sissy Spacek cannot, for all her good efforts, save the part of the workaholic's neglected wife from the clichés with which Stone and Zachary Sklar's script has bedizened it. Stunning work, however, from Laurie Metcalf, Jay O. Sanders, Kevin Bacon, and many others. Most impressive is Tommy Lee Jones as the smooth, homosexual businessman-playboy Clay Shaw, followed closely by Joe Pesci as David Ferrie, one of those seemingly over-the-top Pesci performances that, in the end, register concusively right.

■ What *JFK* proposes to do for our political past, ***Grand Canyon*** undertakes to accomplish for our societal present. Directed by Lawrence Kasdan from a script by himself and his wife, Meg Kasdan, this is the story of life in Los Angeles (or Anytown) today, as seen through the eyes of a handful of upper-to-lower-middle-class characters. Their lives become interconnected by such seemingly random events as a prominent lawyer's car breaking down in one of L.A.'s seamier sections, or that lawyer's wife's taking in an abandoned black baby, or a highly successful hack Hollywood producer's being wounded by a mugger, or said lawyer's extramarital fling with his pretty secretary.

From the man who gave us the vastly overrated *The Big Chill*, this film was almost inevitable. Whoever came up with that supposedly hard-

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nosed but actually glossy backward look at the lost illusions of 1968, just about had to project the same—or similar—characters into an even murkier future, which happens to be our present. We get the tribulations of upward mobility as a black family is arbitrarily moved to a better, white neighborhood; also the trials of—shall we call it downward immobility?—as the lawyer's car, during a nocturnal shortcut, gets stuck in a black slum, and its owner very nearly finds his life cut short.

It is one of *Grand Canyon*'s several misfortunes that this alarmingly believable episode comes at the lengthy movie's beginning, effectively dwarfing what follows. As a scary gang of young blacks surrounds, taunts, and threatens Kevin Kline and his car, racial tension, class hatred, and the precariousness of the most sheltered existence in the urban jungle come into frightening focus. The last-minute arrival of the tow truck, driven by Danny Glover, a black man of sense, strength, and courage, is no deus ex machina, as the risky confrontation continues, more equally balanced now, but no less inflammable.

Though not uninteresting, the subsequent episodes prove increasingly pious and predictable. Especially wearying are the attempts of Mary McDonnell, as Kline's near-hysterical wife, to persuade her spouse to adopt that found baby. And Kline's office affair with Mary-Louise Parker is handled too superficially for any real impact, especially when the actress is allowed to indulge too many of her fussy mannerisms. Danny Glover's romance with a black colleague of Miss Parker's, Alfre Woodard, is not badly done, and yields the film's cleverest comic line, but the evolving friendship between Kline and Glover is routine stuff, as is the puppy love of Kline's teenage son for an adorable girl he meets at camp. Glover's nephew, who tries to run away from the upscale ambiance suddenly foisted on him, also gets relatively short shrift. And we are given much too little of that slick movie producer, played less than persuasively by Steve Martin.

In fact, *Grand Canyon* raises the question of whether a movie, even a longish one, can seriously undertake to examine several lives and a cross section of social problems. A hefty novel can do it, and so, perhaps, could a very long movie, which, however, would create problems of distribution. To be sure, it's not hard to deal with an even larger group of people in, say, a disaster movie, where the central problem is that burning skyscraper or sinking ocean liner. But where there is no center-stage disaster allowing for formulaic characterization, disaster of another kind takes over.

Except for Miss McDonnell's overemoting and Miss Parker's fidgeting, much of the acting is solid, notably that of Glover, Kline, Woodard, and some lesser known others. But there is, finally, something too schematic, didactic, contrived about the film, perhaps best illustrated by the concluding convergence of all the principals on the Grand Canyon, where the symbol, not content to remain a symbol, turns into a grandiose travelogue. All that's missing is Ferde Grofé's music, but then James Newton Howard's manages to be just as grand.

■ I somehow survived without reading William S. Burroughs's pseudo-classic, ***Naked Lunch***, and cannot tell you how faithful the movie David Cronenberg wrote and directed is to it. I can, however, assure you that if what you want is elegant creepiness, baroque monsters, drug fantasy crossed with facile romanticization of the artist's plight, you cannot do much better than this. Canada's David Cronenberg is much tidier with such things than our David Lynch, and here he has a talented cast blessedly unburdened by instant recognition that so easily undermines credibility.

Peter Weller, as the harried, hallucinating writer-exterminator (bugs are his livelihood), Judy Davis as the two unsettling women he gets entangled with, and Ian Holm, Julian Sands, Roy Scheider, plus a variety of discreetly near-anonymous Canadian actors combine to create a plausibly nightmarish stew of horror and humor. The chief suppliers of that are the huge talking bugs, who, with the help of clever animators (or, to be exact, animatronics technicians), turn into advisors, inquisitors, co-conspirators, jailers, and executioners—not to mention typewriters—for the brief delectation and long torment of the addicted writer hero.

Naked Lunch can with equal justice be described both as ugly and point-

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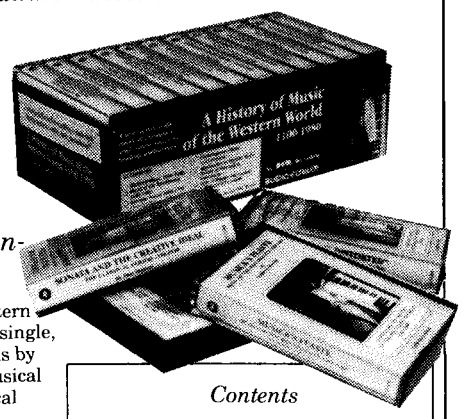

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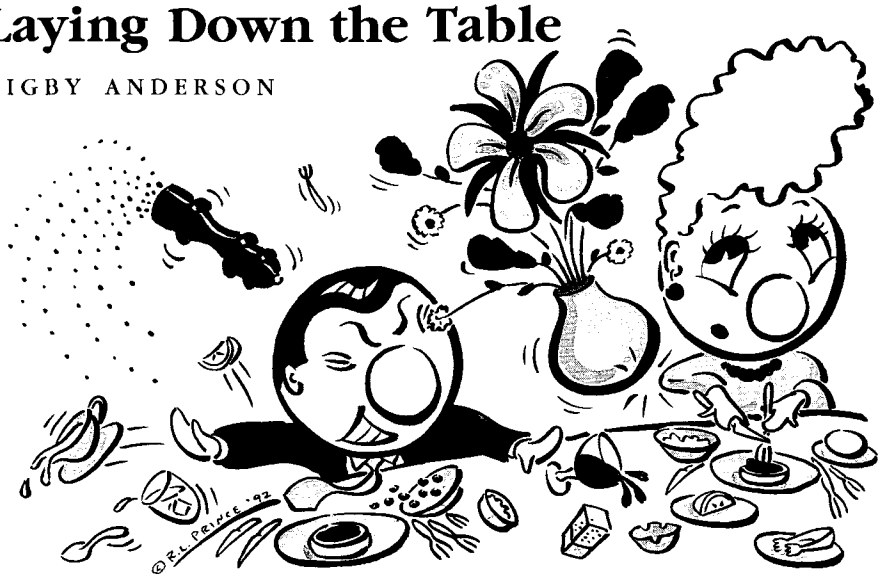
less and as hypnotic and harrowing. It is also funny, obscene, and sui generis. But bugs talking from the anus and changing into typewriters are, ultimately, a rather specialized, solipsistic, drug addict's hell. How long can you listen to someone else's bad dream, however well told? □

DELECTATIONS

Laying Down the Table

DIGBY ANDERSON



Robert Prince

IN THE DAYS before Vatican II, before the Catholic Church sacked and pillaged its own beautiful churches in a wave of destruction which is outdoing Henry VIII, Cromwell, and assorted barbarians and philistines, a Catholic altar was governed by strict principles. It had on it those things necessary for the business to be done there—six candles, tabernacle, missal stand. Articles necessary for only a part of the business came and went as necessary. The articles used were as beautiful as possible but no unnecessary articles, however beautiful, were allowed on the altar. Flowers, for instance, were banned.

These are exactly the rules for laying a conservative dinner table. It must have the necessary things—knives which cut, plates deep enough to take sauces, napkins big enough to cover the most amply proportioned diner. Things only needed during part of the business—rouille for fish soup, wine vinegar for oysters, freshly grated horse radish for roast beef—should come only when necessary. The table should be as bare as possible. Make the essentials as beautiful as possible but do not put unnecessary paraphernalia on the table; absolutely *no* flowers. Only one glass, knife, and fork at a time. And no side plates. A chap wants to attack his partridge with gusto not hugging in his elbows through fear of upsetting phalanxes of unnecessary knives, forks, glasses, roses, decanters, and side plates. It is a dining table not a bric-a-brac shop.

The table should be wood, no stainless steel, no glass. Bare tables are fine. Tables covered with an oil cloth are better. Ones covered with a plain white starched cloth or bare (but not crochet) are OK. Napkins too are plain white, no pictures of bears, no checks, no straps or Velcro, never paper, and lots of starch. The table must be big enough to take the armory of eating and give enough room to stretch the legs underneath, but not unnecessarily large—everything necessary must be in reach without endless asking for it to be passed.

All obvious? Not a bit of it. Large numbers of people seem to buy tables without a thought for their use: the same people who are busy thinking about flowers. The table predicts the meal. It's a fair bet that people who can't be bothered to think about basic things like a table will be a disaster when it comes to choosing and cooking meat. As soon as you spot a dodgy table, best feign sickness and leave before they can do you real damage.

One plate per person. It must be large, round, deep, and (mostly) white. The best French, of all classes, use one plate only, at least up to after the cheese, mopping up the remains of each course with bread. That is why you must have the right sort of bread—and throughout the meal. The bread sits on the edge of your large plate or on the table. It is pulled apart and pushed about, so it cannot be an exploding roll or thin slice and it does not need a plate of its own. Dispensing with exploding rolls and side plates also stops tasteless guests hiding food they wish to leave on the plate and under the roll. Good guests do not dislike good things and do not leave them. At the conservative table there is no hiding place.

No butter is served. We are not making sandwiches. The bread goes with sauces and juices and will not work as a sponge if it is covered in butter. Butter, in proper meals, is used in cooking and only brought on to accompany ham and salami and radishes—then removed.

Knives, as I say, which cut, and forks with four prongs. Keep the same two throughout, wiping them clean after each course on the bread. Fish does not require fish knives just be-

Mr. Anderson is food columnist for The Spectator *(London), and the author of* The Spectator Book of Imperative Cooking.

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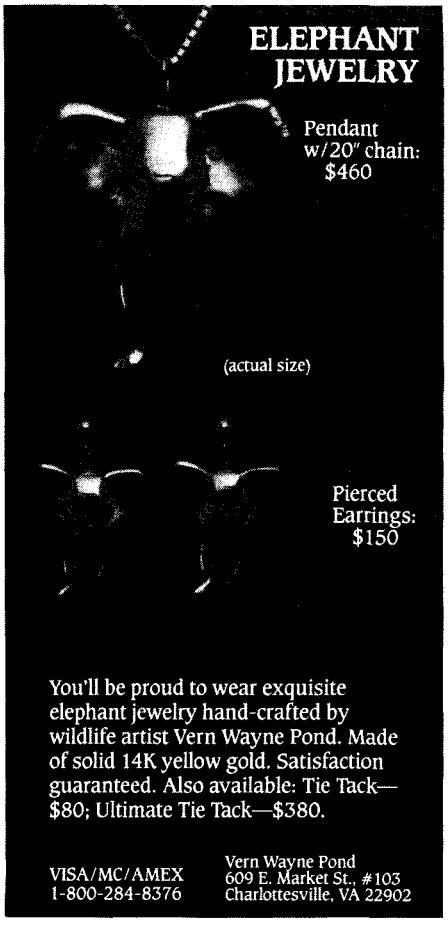
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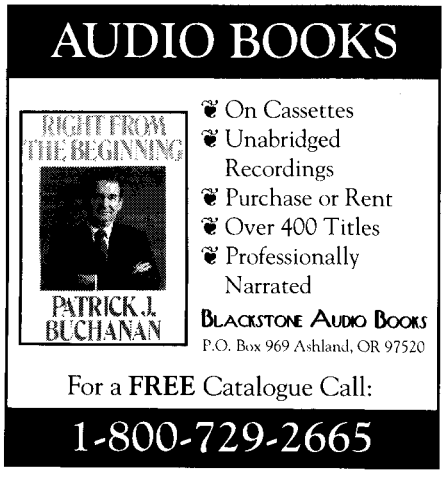

cause it is fish. Only put out fish knives if they are necessary for filleting fish. It is not only vulgar but stupid to lay fish knives for squid. Glasses are always clear, large enough to be generous, but not goldfish bowls. There should be salt, ready ground or rock salt in a grinder; it does not much matter too much, and pepper. This may be black and in a grinder, but the grinder must work, should not be shaped like a pig, should not be transparent—it is not really very amusing watching the corns being ground. And the grinder should not be one of those huge, tall things beloved of homosexual Italian waiters. You may prefer to pre-grind pepper for your guests. It should be done immediately before the meal. I quite like "Stendhal," a mix of black pepper corns and dried red chillies, ground together.

A word on uniformity. There is no rule that each of the, say, six chairs should be the same. Why not give your guests a choice of chairs? Guests, after all, come in various sizes and have different preferences. Some may prefer bigger or smaller glasses, or indeed plates. Why not? We are not Communists, nor are we eating in the army. Similarly, there is no need to give ashtrays to non-smoking guests, but every reason to give them to smokers so that they can comfortably enjoy a cigarette or two between courses.

Last, candles. Pre–Vatican II they were not on the altar but a shelf behind it. The same goes for the dinner table: no candles. You can have them anywhere else you like on one condition: the table itself must be well-lit. We are not attending a spectacle; we are at business and need to see what we are doing—and what others are trying to do to us. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Subway Lives: 24 Hours in the Life of the New York City Subway, by Jim Dwyer (Crown, 312 pp., $20)

New York's subways are probably the dirtiest, most dangerous, and least efficient underground train system, yet it's the one cities worldwide emulate. *Subway Lives*, by *New York Newsday*'s Jim Dwyer, is a discerning social survey of the city's underground transit system, where you're just as likely to see a rider reading the *Irish Times* or *Akropolis* as the *Daily News*; in which more than three million people a day commute to work; which accommodates America's most concentrated melting pot. About which Dwyer observes: "Joyce Bresa only has to turn a corner to see the world. She lives in Astoria, one of the greatest of all New York neighborhoods. The cafés serve coffee thick and black, the way the Greeks like it. . . . Venerable Armenian ladies stoke their ovens for rich savories . . . Church signs are in at least four languages." But the lives of the riders whom Dwyer describes are merely a cover for a perceptive history of the subway and the city that grew up above it. Here and there, Dwyer falls into platitudes, deriding Koch and Reagan for rejecting the liberal dogmas that have made such a ruin of New York. It's clear he's more perceptive in viewing the world beneath than the city above.

Memoir of an American Life, by Hamilton Fish (Regnery Gateway, 242 pp., $19.95)

Few political lives have spanned more eras than that of Hamilton Fish, who knew Theodore Roosevelt and corresponded with Ronald Reagan. During the 1910s and 1920s Fish met up with fellow New York legislator Franklin Roosevelt. That relationship soured when his friend became President and launched the New Deal which Fish opposed "because of its socialist nature and because it assumed too much power for the chief executive" —a fact which has yet to register with FDR's modern idolators. Indeed if Fish's memoirs are worth anything beyond the account of a good man's interesting life, it is for his chronicling of FDR's misdeeds. He considered the President and his aides (Harry Hopkins and Harry Dexter White, in particular) dupes for Stalin. Not only did Roosevelt needlessly draw the U.S. into World War II, Fish argues, he helped Hitler and Stalin carve up Central and Eastern Europe, which led to eventual Communist domination and, well, you know the rest. Fish was generally a conservative man, though with a different stripe from today's conservative (he was an early America Firster). He arrived in the world some thirty years before Communism, and damn near outlived it, dying last year at 102. —GEOFFREY MORRIS

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TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney

1 E	2 B	3 P		4 Q	5 F	6 C	7 I		8 J	9 G	10 T	11 O	12 N		13 K	14 P		15 E	16 D
17 Q		18 C	19 L	20 E	21 P	22 T	23 J	24 A	25 I	26 M	27 N	28 S	29 Q		30 O	31 I		32 E	33 B
34 K	35 P		36 L	37 T		38 A	39 F	40 G		41 I	42 J	43 M	44 C	45 B	46 U	47 H	48 P	49 D	50 O
	51 I	52 A	53 Q	54 G	55 S	56 K	57 R	58 D		59 J	60 H		61 M	62 A	63 L	64 E	65 O	66 I	67 F
	68 P	69 R	70 J		71 Q	72 L	73 E		74 T	75 N	76 K	77 G	78 A	79 P	80 J	81 C	82 F		83 H
84 D		85 O	86 T		87 M	88 I	89 U	90 H	91 F	92 L	93 P	94 G		95 N	96 T		97 C	98 O	99 E
100A	101S	102D		103J	104C		105B	106E	107Q	108K		109H	110I	111A	112G	113O	114C	115B	116F
117Q		118R	119A	120J	121I	122P	123L	124T	125B	126A	127G	128C		129N	130B	131I		132N	133J
	134Q	135D	136G	137M	138E	139I		140U	141N	142H		143E	144J	145O	146A	147K	148I	149B	
150K	151O	152D		153F	154H	155N	156G	157D	158B	159P	160A		161Q	162S		163M	164R	165B	166T
	167T	168R	169S	170U		171E	172F	173J	174B	175M	176N	177K	178L	179Q	180P	181C			

DEFINITIONS

A. Bovine musings? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
111 24 62 126 100 146 38 78 119 52 160

B. Naughty pol's fate ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
115 45 174 149 33 158 2 105 165 130 125

C. Cape Canaveral process ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
97 104 6 181 81 18 44 114 128

D. Kitchen pest ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
16 135 157 152 102 84 49 58

E. Delayed reaction ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
99 32 1 143 64 106 138 20 73 171

F. Classical music genre ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
5 39 67 153 91 172 116 82 15

G. Duplicated date in publishing? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
136 127 54 77 112 40 156 9 94

H. Massage ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
154 90 47 142 83 109 60

I. *Voluminous* work ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
31 88 148 139 66 25 110 121 7 131 51 41

J. Like Yeltsin's predecessors ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
23 133 173 120 42 144 59 70 103 80 8

K. Award, for a Triple Crown winner? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
34 177 108 76 56 150 13 147

L. Ancient Asia Minor person ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
72 36 178 123 19 92 63

M. Ape ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
137 163 87 43 61 26 175

N. Military stance? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
129 176 95 12 141 132 27 155 75

O. Russian-roulette player's yen? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
113 50 85 151 145 30 65 11 98

P. French landmark (2 words) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
122 48 21 14 35 79 159 180 68 3 93

Q. Having a proven track record ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
161 179 134 117 71 107 29 4 17 53

R. What a man's grasp should *be exceeded* by ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
57 164 69 118 168

S. Sioux language ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
162 55 169 101 28

T. Hunch ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
124 86 167 10 74 166 22 96 37

U. Jumpy amphibian ___ ___ ___ ___
170 46 140 89

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition. **See page 60 for solution to last Trans-O-Gram.**

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Solution to Last Issue's Trans-O-Gram

BARRY GOLDWATER:

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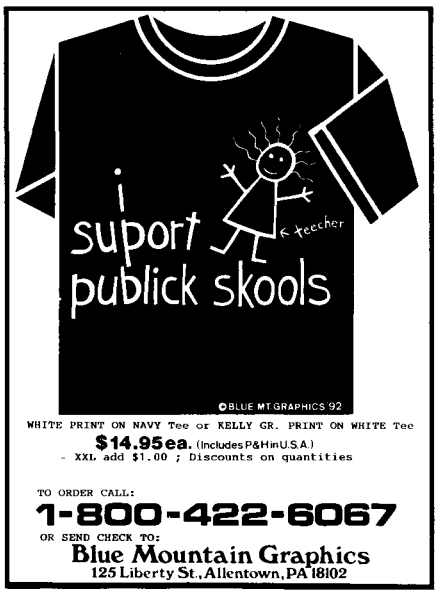
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FINN

(Continued from page 46)

which I served) co-chaired by two governors and including four members of Congress. The Education Department and the Humanities Endowment have already made grants for standard-setting work to commence in science and history, roughly equivalent to what the NCTM did in math. Geography and English will eventually follow.

Nobody need obey these standards. No state, locality, school, or teacher must mold its curriculum to them. Nobody will be forced to administer exams keyed to them, either, let alone to use the results from such exams for "high stakes" decisions like graduation, college admission, and employment hiring. The exams themselves will come in assorted flavors, if NCEST's approach is followed. The Council endorsed the gradual creation of an examination "system" but rejected a single national exam.

That's the direction we seem to be headed. It's fraught with peril aplenty, to be sure. On one side is the possibility that the whole endeavor will be too slow to start, wretchedly confusing, toothless, and ultimately ineffectual. On the other side is the risk of developing influential exams that embody the priorities of relativists, multiculturalists, Afrocentrists, and the like.

The risk, I think, is worth taking. Lamar Alexander is an adroit political helmsman and may well keep us from crashing. The status quo plainly won't do. And Barbara Lerner's "national book" idea, beguiling as it is, isn't going to work, either. Try, just for starters, to imagine the chaos on the floor of the House, "Resolved: the plays of William Shakespeare will henceforth be our national book." Come to think of it, that debate would be such a sight to behold that perhaps her proposal approach should be tried after all, if only for the national belly-laugh it would give us. □

Chester Finn insists that a comprehensive system of fifteen national content tests spanning nine grades is not an attempt to impose a national curriculum. If he and Diane Ravitch believe that, they're the only smart people who do. Everyone else understands that's exactly what it is. Hirsch understands: he's for it, because he hopes to make his Western Civilization curriculum the one. James Q. Wilson understands: he's against it, because he knows it won't happen. Why does Mr. Finn fantasize that he can avoid this reality? Apparently because testers conned him into thinking they can devise new types of content tests that don't specify content. For a sample of what these gurus produce, read Bob Samuelson's fine piece in the July 11 Washington Post.

Mr. Finn also insists standards embodied in voluntary *national tests—tests you don't have to pass to graduate—will make our kids work hard enough to restore our lost competitiveness. That's fantasy too, and the clear-eyed all see it—Wilson, Samuelson, and the editors of* The New Republic *(December 16). Voluntary standards offer realistic hope. They make most kids work harder and, as minimum-competence testing proved, when they do, 90 per cent succeed. Does Education Secretary Lamar Alexander share Mr. Finn's fantasies? Or does he endorse them only to sell educators, counting on friends in the business world to make his voluntary tests mandatory by denying jobs to kids who can't pass them? I think the latter, and that many businesses will go along, hoping for better workers. They'll get worse, and pay more. New gibberish is costly; old math and reading skill tests are cheap and effective.*

Back to my idea of what else *we should require of* all *our kids—other than Shakespeare. Mr. Finn faults me for not requiring the Federalist Papers too and is sure Congress will laugh. I console myself with good company: Aristotle also thought politics required maturity, and Congress can surprise.*

—BL

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Capital Plunder

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 3

Let's make it as simple as possible.

In 1978, Mr. and Mrs. Jones bought a house for $50,000. Last year, they sold that house for $100,000. Internal Revenue wants the Joneses to pay a capital-gains tax of $14,000 on the economic event. But one hundred thousand 1991 dollars are exactly equal to fifty thousand 1978 dollars, thanks to inflation. I hereby summon a joint session of the Democratic and Republican National Committees, and I give them this mandate: Deputize someone, an anti-Diogenes, to go out in search of the man so dishonest as to pronounce current capital-gains tax policy as defensible.

You will remember that in 1981 when the tax rates were massively reduced, the Reagan Administration came up with indexation for the income tax. Without making a public point of it, the Democrats opposed indexation. Not comprehensively: there was indexation of a great deal. Social Security benefits, for instance, had been indexed since 1972. But inflation had been the indispensable psychological aid to Congresses desiring with no effort whatsoever to accomplish three things: 1) Reduce the real weight of the deficit (if the public debt is one trillion dollars and the year's inflation is 5 per cent, then, Whoosh!—the public debt is de facto reduced to $950 billion dollars). 2) Increase tax revenues. Mr. and Mrs. Jones earned $30,000 the year before, but in the new year were given raises to compensate for inflation. Nice to get that extra $1,500, but they found that they had walked into a higher tax bracket, and their tax load was—$1,500 more than last year's. So they were net down by the amount of inflation. And 3) Conceal the whole operation. The wonderful furtiveness of inflation: Congress contributes to inflation; reduces the deficit; and increases revenue, the whole thing accomplishable without the need for a single vote or debate.

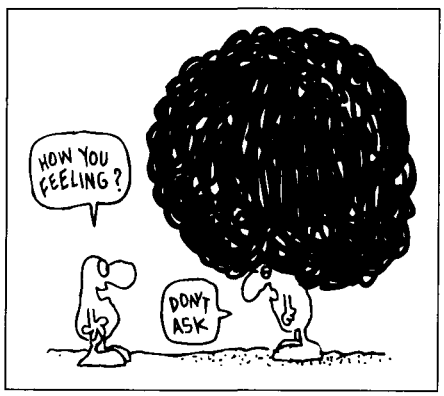
Notice that actual indexation having started in 1985 for income tax, nobody running for President is suggesting its removal. It is just plain embarrassing to be associated with a program of outright non-legislated robbery.

Now President Bush has once again called for a capital-gains reduction. The Democratic leadership opposes capital-gains reductions—on the grounds that they will be seen to give advantages to the rich (some Democrats would oppose a cure for cancer if it were to begin by helping the rich). To index capital gains isn't the same thing as to reduce the tax on capital gains, but it is a step in the right direction, and we are all indebted to Paul Craig Roberts for a liberating insight, namely that the President, as Chief Executive, has the power himself to index capital gains.

The Roberts Sunburst irradiates from existing law, which decrees that a capital-gains tax will be paid by anyone selling something at a profit, which is calculated by the difference between the "basis" of the article sold and the price it fetched during the last taxable year. The "basis" has been measured "nominally" over the years (i.e., Mr. and Mrs. Jones paid $50,000 for their house, so that figure is the basis on which the tax is to be computed). But there is another way to designate the basis, which is by "real" as distinct from nominal measurement. The real cost of the Jones house, when they sold it last year, was $100,000, so they realized no capital gain, and therefore no capital-gains tax is collectible.

It is the responsibility of the Executive, not the Legislature, to decide how to measure the "basis." Regulations are simply instructions handed down by the Executive to the IRS. Who could object if Mr. Bush were to take that step? Mr. anti-Diogenes is getting old out there, beating the bushes in search of someone who shouts out that indexation is unjust.

If for whatever reason Mr. Bush chose to approach the Roberts Plan tentatively, he might instruct the IRS that the real basis for evaluation should, for the next year, apply only to real property. Let stocks and bonds and early Picassos wait a year. What would instantly happen is the biggest boost for housing in U.S. history and, not incidentally, one up for honest dealings between the people and their government. □



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The Grandmaster On Russia

NEW YORK, JANUARY 24

I always vaguely wondered whether grandmasters in chess were, well, you know—bright. I suspected that probably they were on the order of those calculating prodigies we read about, who can tell you in a split second what is the cube root of 298,847 but can't remember whether today is Tuesday. I'll never wonder again after dining with Gary Kasparov.

He was the youngest man ever to win the world chess championship, in 1985, age 22. The last time out, the purse was $2.2 million, and in 1993 in Los Angeles, he will meet the challenger. If he wins, he will keep $4.4 million. Most recently he did battle against the most sophisticated computer IBM could come up with. There were a few breathless moments, but he prevailed. He is not sure this can go on forever, IBM having gone back to the drawing boards resolved to transmute a mechanical intelligence into an intelligence unbeatable by any human being. Kasparov talked a little about this scientific presumption, but he does not belittle it.

Soon after he became world champion he began to criticize Communist practices, doing so so ardently and so persuasively as to annoy even Mr. Gorbachev, who was especially exasperated when Mr. Kasparov predicted early in 1989 that Germany would be reunited in the early Nineties. In fact, unification came within a year of when he spoke.

He is thought to be something of a prophet on political matters, and his views are much sought out. He has views on every subject, focusing at the present moment on the economic rehabilitation of his homeland. And he is quite certain what Moscow ought to do right now: Repudiate the foreign debt.

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All of it?

"No, just the debt contracted under Gorbachev. Look: Suppose Castro were overthrown tomorrow. Do you think the Cubans should be made to repay to the former Soviet Union the debt accumulated over the three decades in which the Soviet Union made possible the impoverishment of the Cuban people?"

Then there is the problem of, well, law. Surely the moral point is persuasive: Why should the Cubans pay the expenses of their tyrants? But the legal question hangs on whether the existing governments of Russia, Ukraine, etc. should assume the formal obligations of the progenitive state, the USSR?

It is generally accepted that a revolutionary government does not need to pay the debts of the antecedent government, even as, for instance, Fidel Castro forswore all debts incurred by predecessor governments. So it was with the French, when they overthrew the monarchy. But the question arises whether a sometime Union, dissolved into a dozen republics, oughtn't to recognize that debt incurred by the pre-federalized entity.

We are talking about $65 billion or so, and the principal casualty, should Russia et al. follow the advice of their grandmaster, would be Germany, which so eagerly financed the last years of Gorbachev. There is, of course, the problem of rescinding debts at the same time that you are occupied in trying to borrow fresh money. But Mr. Kasparov waves away that problem, on the grounds that a loan to the government of Mr. Yeltsin is clearly different in character from a loan to the predecessor government. And although Yeltsin's was not in formal terms a revolution, what could be more revolutionary than the difference between life then and prospective life now? If Nicholas II to Lenin via Kerensky was a revolution, why shouldn't Andropov to Yeltsin via Gorbachev be a revolution?

One happily conceded the point, and went on to other matters. Is he confident of the economic future? Yes, supremely so, although there will be hardships. Is there a danger of a putsch? Look: What would happen if there were a putsch tomorrow is very simply this: The recidivists would be overthrown, and there would then follow the bloodiest purge perhaps in the history of the world, so many Russians having been involved in the bloody enterprise of Bolshevik rule. "If there was an election tomorrow, the Communists would not gain 5 per cent of the vote."

But Mr. Kasparov's optimism is tempered by his conviction that Yeltsin cannot rule with the existing Parliament. "Half of them are still Communists. He should dismiss the Parliament and call for a general election and then a new constitution that would give him those temporary powers he needs to maintain order while the economic house rebuilds."

Elementary, for a grandmaster. □

Pamela Resch, Shame!

NEW YORK, JANUARY 15

Pamela Resch, 39, did not accompany President Bush to Japan. She has no complaint the Japanese can help her with. And she might not have qualified under the presidential mandate to go forth to generate jobs-jobs-jobs.

Her problem has been in keeping her own "job." This turns out to be impossible under the law in San Jose, California. Pamela Resch has been engaged in illegal activity, and San Jose wants to fine her and has expressly forbidden her to continue in her subversive activity. Never let it be said about the elders of San Jose that they sleep, while lawbreakers prosper.

Pamela Resch is a pianist. When she sits down to play, you wonder (dark thought, deep inside) if anyone that wholesome, that unmistakably American-Californian (she was born in San Jose) can play the piano with true skill and subtlety. The eyes open wider and wider as she charges on, playing the most exacting music of Bach and Chopin and Liszt, never missing a note, visibly transported by the sounds she is herself transcribing, and her innocent, voluptuous enchantment enchants also the twenty guests invited to hear her. Oh, she plays not only in salons in San Jose, but in Carnegie Hall, and in Vienna, and she cuts discs. But there is a home-bent wholesomeness about her, and what she has mostly done during the past seven years is play in her home, shared with her jazz musician husband, in San Jose: a charming two-story house much indulged by art and stonework and flora and fauna, a striking house. What Pamela Resch wanted to do in that house is to make music for her guests. But paying guests. It is not widely understood that musicians also need to earn their living.

So that, seven years ago, she decided to perform once a month or so for guests to whom she would charge $25 to hear her play for an hour and one-half or two. She thought also, because this is how she is, to give them a glass of wine, and then they could all linger if they liked, walk about the garden, talk about the music, or whatever.

Enter the San Jose vice squad.

In order to advertise her house-concerts it was necessary to take out a small classified ad in the San Jose newspaper. This ad was spotted by a vigilant police sergeant in the vice squad who, frankly, could not believe that anyone asking $25 for a visit to a residence at a specified hour, in the early evening, was actually going to earn that money by playing nineteenth-century music on the piano! Obviously there would be, at the very least, live sex and free hash.

Accordingly the vice squad, suitably disguised (an interesting question: What is a suitable disguise if you want to go unrecognized at a sex show, but want to give the impression you are here to attend a piano recital?), came in to 675 Margaret Street, San Jose. And (to his dismay?) sat down and listened to two hours of gorgeous piano music after which he was offered one glass of wine. Nothing . . . of you-know-what . . . was going on in the closet, or in the attic or cellar. So the next day he filed his melancholy report. No vice. But this policeman was not without resources. Maybe no vice, but there was illegal activity going on. She didn't have a license to do business, and she was serving alcoholic beverages without a license.

When the matter went public, the sensible could not believe it. Her neighbors had no complaints. In general, those who believe zoning laws are okay also agreed that there is a difference between piano recitals in a private home and setting up a McDonald's hamburger stand. One council member said, We can't waive the zoning rule on the grounds that she is an artist-in-residence; how would we treat other applications from artists-in-residence? Another council member wondered why Pamela Resch did not play more ethnic music in her recitals.

The council voted against her request for a zoning waiver, 7 to 4. And the city wants back taxes for a business which theoretically couldn't have operated because it was against the law.

Bemused members of the community wonder whether the bureaucratic sclerosis of their city government doesn't tell us something about the cosmic problems of Detroit. If San Jose can't figure out how to permit an artist to play the piano for paying guests, maybe the good old USA just doesn't have it any longer to make jobs-jobs-jobs and to let us all be free and affluent, and proud. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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The *Sic* Society

FOR ME, matters came to a head on the morning of January 26. Queasily making my way through the pages of the Sunday *New York Times* I came upon a four-column photo in "The Week in Review" that summed it all up. A few days earlier, the Honorable Yoshio Sakurauchi, Japan's answer to Speaker Foley, had denounced American workers as "lazy and illiterate." Predictably, this had triggered another round of Nippophobia from American politicians, corporate bigwigs, and union hacks—few of them noted for their energy or cultivation. But the ultimate answer to Mr. Sakurauchi—in a sense, his vindication—came with this photo in the *Times*.

It was captioned: "Worker from a Ford assembly plant sending a message last week outside a Toyota dealership near Detroit." The picture itself was of a baseball-capped, fist-shaking gent surrounded by American flags, carrying a sloppily lettered placard, which read: "JAPAN SAID YOUR [*sic*] LAZY. NO TO JAPANESE IMPORTS." So much for quality control in Detroit; ours has, indeed, become a *sic* society.

I have seen far more egregious examples of misspellings, malapropisms, and tautologies in far higher places: in the papers of Harvard graduate students; in teachers' reports; in the increasingly raw filings of journalists now that copy desks have been reduced or eliminated; and even—perhaps I should say especially—among senior politicians and government officials.

Having mulled over the problem for some time, the conclusion is inescapable. Shortly after I left primary school in the Fifties, the order must have gone out to stop teaching spelling and reading. Whether the culprit was the Society of the Illuminati, the Gnomes of Zurich, or fluoride in the drinking water, nobody can say for sure. Personally, I favor that great champion of regressive leveling, the National Education Association, but I can't prove it. What I do know is that more and more otherwise-educated people under the age of 45—including a good many educators—simply cannot express themselves in writing.

A striking example was a staffer of mine when I served as Ronald Reagan's Director of Speechwriting in the early Eighties. The fellow in question—we will call him Danny Roarblocker—was a capable speechwriter with a bright, original mind. But he was also a constant source of amused amazement to some of us because of his fatal early immersion in the Southern California school system.

Among Brother Roarblocker's more notable creations was a malapropism that turned a national landmark into a cloacal accoustical system, the "Hollywood Bowel." His keyboard alchemy knew no bounds, with historic milestones transformed into millstones, and—his crowning glory—a *fait accompli* rendered into an uneasy combination of predestination and Greek cheese, a "feta compli." Fortunately, Danny has gone on to a higher station in life: As a national legislator, he no longer has to do his own spelling and can concentrate on conservative policy and principles—which, by the way, he does quite well.

Doubtless, part of the problem is television, part a scarcity of adult conversation during childhood, thanks to the two-job household. Picture-tube babies learn by hearing and repeating, not by reading and writing—and most of what they hear is verbal mush tailored to the juvenile ear. The absence of much adult conversation aggravates this mental and verbal atrophy; expecting children to develop a civilized degree of fluency by talking to each other is about as reasonable as expecting a day-care center full of toddlers to potty train each other.

My feelings are mixed. On the one hand, it would be nice to look forward to at least one more generation of good, literate novelists and essayists for purposes of twilight reading. Too late for me to take the advice of a now-deceased friend who suggested saving Trollope for one's terminal illness; I finished Trollope years ago and have yet to suffer from anything more drastic than acute boredom and acid indigestion—or "undigestion" in the self-taught English of my paternal grandmother who was fluent in French, Turkish, and Armenian, but had to pick up her English bit by bit as a young émigré's bride.

ON THE other hand, the meeting of Mrs. Malaprop and Miss Pelling in our *sic* society does have its up side for those of us with a slightly morbid turn of humor. Just a few days ago, the wife of a screenwriter friend, deeply moved by a poignant love scene, transformed it into something that might have happened in Jeffrey Dahmer's kitchen. It was, she said, brushing away a tear, "heart-rendering." And recently I became the captive audience of an incredibly boring, boorish conversation in a hotel lounge. A gaggle of sozzled traveling salesmen were sharing shopworn card tricks and stale jokes. Suddenly, the dreariness was relieved when one of the bleary-eyed Babbitts declared that there was nothing he enjoyed more than simple evenings of cards, beer, and "male bondage."

Despite my best efforts—in the words of the original Mrs. Malaprop—to "illiterate him" from my memory, I remain fettered to the recollection. —ARAM BAKSHIAN JR.

"Yes, we do teach it here, but I'm afraid Women's Studies isn't what you think it is."

Mr. Bakshian, a member of the National Council for the Humanities, writes on politics, history, and the arts.

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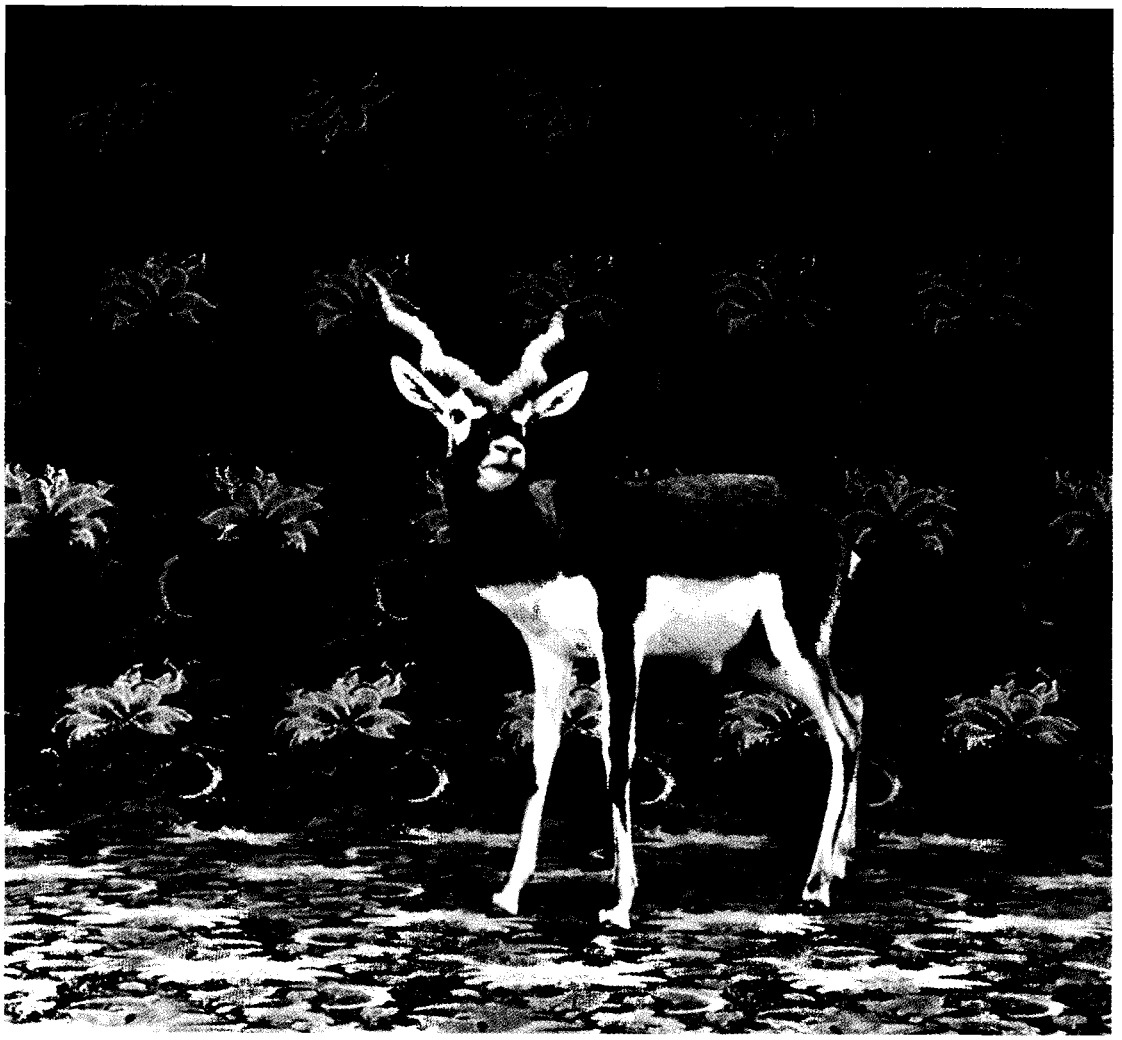

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